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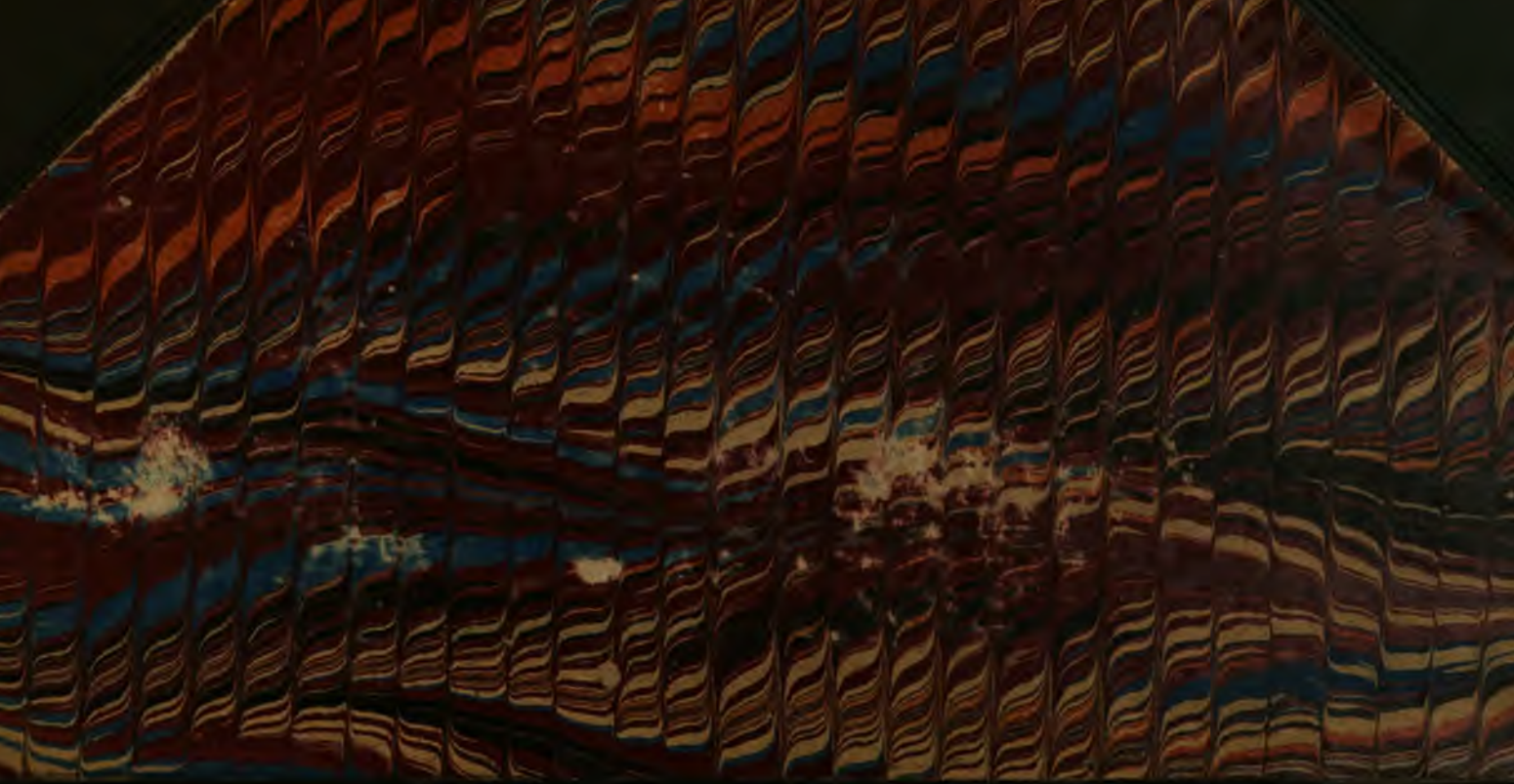

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IRISH LIFE.

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AND PARLIAMENT STREET

LONGMANS & Co LONDON

There was a pause, and a dead silence, I stood naked and bare headed before them, I looked at them, and they at me. They hesitated

REALITIES

OF

IRISH LIFE.

BY

W. STEUART TRENCH,

LAND AGENT IN IRELAND

TO

MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE, MARQUIS OF BATH, AND LORD DIGBY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HIS SON

J. TOWNSEND TRENCH.

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1868.

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PREFACE.

Cardtown, Mountrath, Ireland:
August, 1868.

DEAR LORD DUNRAVEN,

The following sketches of the 'Realities of Irish Life' have been penned by me from time to time within the last few years. The idea of placing them on record was first suggested by your Lordship and your accomplished cousin Miss Gallwey. During the many pleasant hours we have passed together in boating and other excursions on the beautiful bay, and amongst the mountains and valleys of Kenmare, Ireland in her various phases was often discussed between us. Those incidents which have occurred to me during a somewhat eventful experience amongst her people on their native soil were not unfrequently the subject of conversation; and your Lordship and your cousin often urged me to commit them to paper. I have done so in the

following pages, and I now venture to lay them before the public.

My reasons for publishing them are mainly threefold :—

First. My tales are of real life. Many of the incidents described therein have been told in various forms, often very incorrectly, in the newspapers and journals of the day. My desire has been to give a clear and truthful account of occurrences which virulent party spirit or local prejudices have placed before the public, distorted through a false medium. I have endeavoured calmly and dispassionately to relate the facts as I believe them to have occurred, and in most cases as I know them to have happened to myself in person. From this latter cause has arisen a more frequent use of the first person singular than I should otherwise have desired; but under the circumstances, this could not be avoided.

My second reason for publishing these tales is to give the English public some idea of the difficulties which occasionally beset the path of an Irish land-

lord or agent who is desirous to improve the district in which he is interested. If he be willing to adopt the '*Laissez aller*' system, and let everything take its own course, he may have an easy life of it in Ireland; but if he ventures to interfere with old habits, old prejudices, or old ways—however loud may be the call for improvement—he must be prepared to contend with difficulties which none but those who have experienced them could have imagined.

Thirdly, I would wish to add my testimony to the fact that Ireland—notwithstanding the many difficulties which may beset the path of those who earnestly desire to improve her condition—is nevertheless not altogether unmanageable. They will doubtless meet with many disappointments, many acts of apparent, and some of real ingratitude; but justice fully and firmly administered is always appreciated in the end. I admit it will require much firmness and discretion to carry justice to its legitimate conclusions, torn as Ireland is by contending parties; but if this be truly done, I have never yet known it fail.*

* I grant there may be, and are, *individual* exceptions to this rule, but they are very rare.—W. S. T.

I have purposely abstained from offering any opinion of my own on the various political and social grievances of which Ireland complains—real or imaginary. It is not that these questions have not attracted my earnest attention, and perhaps they may hereafter form the subject of another volume. But Englishmen frequently complain that they cannot obtain *facts* concerning Ireland. I have here endeavoured to supply some which have come under my own observation. Whether they are worthy of being recorded or not, the public must decide.

It may perhaps be objected that some of my tales are abrupt, and have no obvious or necessary connection; and also that they are descriptive of varied scenes of a class and nature totally different from each other. I fear I must to some extent plead guilty to the charge. Were I to supply the missing links, I should simply give a history of my life, and this could scarcely prove generally interesting.

From youth to manhood, and from manhood to the verge of age, it has been my lot to live surrounded by a kind of poetic turbulence and almost

romantic violence, which I believe could scarcely belong to real life in any other country in the world.

I could describe numerous other scenes in which from time to time I have been an actor or spectator, more interesting perhaps to some than those I have selected in this volume; but they would not be so essentially characteristic of Ireland, or of the life which they who attempt to grapple with Irish difficulties are sometimes compelled to lead.

I need hardly say that the several noble proprietors whom I now serve, have kindly given me leave to publish those portions of my sketches which refer to their several estates.

Believe me sincerely yours,

W. STEUART TRENCH.

The Earl of Dunraven.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	SCHOOL	1
II.	THE BARRING OUT	19
III.	EARLY LIFE	37
IV.	THE RIBBON CODE	47
V.	FARNEY. 1843	63
VI.	BATTLE OF MAGHERACLOON	79
VII.	THE POTATO-ROT	97
VIII.	THE EXODUS. KENMARE	111
IX.	MARY SHEA	135
X.	THE SEAL HUNT	153
XI.	JOE McKEY	171
XII.	THE CONSPIRACY	185
XIII.	THE MURDER	201
XIV.	ALICE McMAHON	217
XV.	THE ARREST	231

CHAP.		PAGE
XVI.	THE CONFESSION	251
XVII.	THE PRISONER	267
XVIII.	THE EXECUTION	277
XIX.	PATSY McDERMOT	291
XX.	GEASHILL MANOR	311
XXI.	THE REVIVAL	333
XXII.	FARNEY. 1865—1868	347
	CONCLUSION	361

APPENDIX.

'THE SHAN VAN VOCHT' 363

VISIT OF THE MARQUIS OF BATH TO HIS FARNEY ESTATE, IRELAND 364

LETTERS CONCERNING THE FAMINE IN SCHULL BY REV. F. F. TRENCH 388

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PLATE			
IX.	THE CRISIS	*frontispiece*	
I.	BAGGING AN USHER . .	*to face page*	17
II.	SHOOTING NED GRIMES . . .	„	27
III.	THE RIBBON SCARF . . .	„	47
IV.	THE TENANT	„	57
V.	THE INFORMER	„	60
VI.	THE YOUNG MURDERER . . .	„	61
VII.	THE MESSAGE	„	72
VIII.	THE CAPTURE	„	73
X.	THE SPEECH	„	77
XI.	THE BATTLE	„	87
XII.	TRIAL BY BLOOD	„	89
XIII.	THE SPANISH BEAUTY . . .	„	137
XIV.	DERRYNANE CAVE	„	161
XV.	THE GUIDE	„	162
XVI.	THE OLD CAPTAIN	„	163
XVII.	THE SWIMMERS	„	164

PLATE		PAGE
XVIII.	THE ATTACK	*to face* 168
XIX.	THE CORMORANT	„ 165
XX.	THE COTTAGE	„ 174
XXI.	THE KITCHEN	„ 177
XXII.	THE DEFIANCE	„ 180
XXIII.	THE SURRENDER	„ 181
XXIV.	THE PLEDGE	„ 182
XXV.	THE BROKEN HEART . . .	„ 183
XXVI.	THE TRIAL BY JURY . . .	„ 190
XXVII.	CARRICKMACROSS, 1851 . . .	„ 213
XXVIII.	THE ESCAPE	„ 215
XXIX.	THE SECRET	„ 238
XXX.	THE ROCKY PASS	„ 245
XXXI.	THE MAP OF IRELAND	*To be placed, neatly folded, immediately before the Appendix.*

REALITIES

OF

IRISH LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

SCHOOL.

I THINK it was about the year 1821, that I was sent—then a very little boy—along with my elder brother, to the College, as it was called, of Armagh. It was then in high repute as a leading Irish school. The master was a most learned Doctor of Divinity. He had been a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, was admitted by all to be a first-class scholar, and was a most amiable and estimable gentleman. His wife was worthy of her husband—kind, affectionate, and sensible; and they had a large and clever family of sons and daughters. The college itself was a cold and dreary-looking place enough—bare stone walls being almost the only object which met the view within its precincts. It is still standing. It is one of the endowed schools of Ireland, to enquire into the condition of which an important commission, with the Marquis of Kildare at its head, was issued a few years ago. An able report, and several large blue books of evidence, appear

as yet to have been the only result which has come before the public. It is not many years since I visited this scene of my early youth; and it then appeared to be in almost exactly the same condition as it was when I first saw it, some forty-five years ago.

The College of Armagh in the year 1821, and during the whole six years of my residence therein, was one of those old-fashioned Irish schools into which reform had never penetrated. The former master had been an excellent one; he was a good scholar himself, and knew how to teach others—the latter qualification being quite distinct from the former. He was also a man of considerable administrative ability. He understood the management of men (and boys are little men), and, partly by his scholarship, partly by his powers of administration, he had raised the character of the school to a position of some celebrity. 'The Doctor,' as the new master was called, had been appointed on the death of his predecessor; and he succeeded to a thriving school with about one hundred boarders, and a considerable number of day-boys.

The old master had died, and the new master had begun to reign in his stead, before I first entered the school. All the old fashions had been retained; and no alterations in the customs—or what the boys called 'the rights of the school'—had been introduced. 'Fagging' in its most extensive application was in full force; and as I was a little boy, and put down into the lowest class, I was seized on as a fag by one of the boys in the head form. I was somewhat rudely treated at first; and I commenced my studies at the college by learning how to clean my master's shoes—an art in which, I must admit, I had not been previously instructed.

There were no railways in those days; and it took twelve hours to travel by the stage coach from Dublin to

Armagh, a distance now traversed in less than one third of the time. 'The Armagh Lark'—such, I think, was the name of the coach—(and if early rising could give any title to the appellation it certainly deserved the name) started from Dublin every morning at six o'clock.

It was the middle of the month of January, but we were up very early on the morning of our departure; and resolving not to be outdone by 'The Lark,' we had secured seats on the outside of the coach by half-past five A.M. We started what the guard called 'a full coach;' and with the usual blowing of his horn—a dreary attempt at hilarity it seemed to me of a cold winter's morning—and a flourish and cracking of whips by the coachman, we cleared safely out of the streets of Dublin.

'The coach' breakfasted at Ashbourne. The road was bleak and treeless, and even at present it does not abound in shade; but the novelty of sitting behind four fast-trotting horses kept my spirits up, and what with the fresh air and the exhilarating influence of galloping at full pace for the last mile before reaching Ashbourne—as if we were in a most tremendous hurry for breakfast, in which even the horses seemed to participate,—I got down in good heart from my perch behind the coachman, and rejoiced to see a roaring fire and a smoking breakfast already laid out most invitingly before us. I hesitated for a moment to sit down to anything so delightful; but I was cheered and encouraged by a kind-hearted gentleman near me. He sweetened my tea with plenty of sugar, poured half the contents of the cream-jug into my cup, and heaped my plate with an abundant helping of a hot beef-steak. I soon succeeded in eating such a breakfast as I doubt if I have ever eaten since.

In twenty minutes we were all astir again. The guard blew his bugle loud and cheerily, and somehow it seemed

to me that he sounded it much better than he had done in the morning when leaving Dublin. No doubt he did, for he also had had his breakfast of a good beef-steak, with plenty of bread and butter; and even the weather-seasoned guard himself was not insensible to these cheering influences. We all scrambled up again to our seats; conversation became general amongst the passengers, all of whom seemed wonderfully thawed by the breakfast; the coachman began to crack his jokes as well as his whip; and, the morning being fine, though cold and crisp, we were all merry enough as we trotted on towards Drogheda.

'Where are you going to-day, my little fellow?' said the kind-hearted gentleman who had put the sugar in my tea at breakfast, and who I now saw was seated next me on the outside of the coach.

'I am going to school at the College of Armagh, Sir,' replied I, laying stress on the word 'college,' as I was rather proud of the name.

'Have you ever been at school before, my little man?'

'Oh yes, Sir,' replied I; 'I was at a preparatory school, where there were only little boys; but now I am going to the College of Armagh, where there are a great many big boys.'

'Have you any sisters at home?' enquired my companion.

'Yes, Sir—five.'

'Well, take my advice, my little man, and don't tell their names to the boys when you go to this same College of Armagh,' replied my companion. 'If you do, I think you will be sorry for it afterwards.'

'Thank you, Sir,' said I; 'I am much obliged. I'll try not. But then, if the boys ask me, I don't see how I can

help it; besides, I don't think my sisters' names are at all bad ones.'

'Never you mind that,' returned the kind gentleman; 'you will find, as soon as you arrive, some one or other of the boys will ask you to tell him your sisters' names, quite in a confidential manner, as if he knew them before and felt a deep interest in their welfare. But don't you tell him one of them. Say, "you know a trick worth two of that;" put your fingers to your nose this way' (spreading out his fingers longitudinally from his nose), 'or anything else you like, to put him off; but mind you don't tell him your sisters' names, or you will be sorry for it many a day after.'

'Thank you, Sir, I'll try not,' I replied. I was sorely puzzled, however, to know why I was not to tell my sisters' names, but I resolved nevertheless to act on the kind gentleman's advice. He got down at Dundalk, and I never to my knowledge saw him afterwards; but the strange nature of the only piece of advice he gave me, as I was just about to enter on my career in the far-famed College of Armagh, has remained strongly impressed on my mind ever since.

We changed horses at Drogheda, in the narrow streets of which we very nearly ran over a little boy, and upon our arrival at Castle Bellingham, some bread and cheese appeared upon the table in the little inn, accompanied by a long glass of foaming ale from the renowned brewery of the town. I did not feel hungry at the time, and the glass of ale looked far too good for a little boy like me; so I was about to decline taking it, when the coachman, who I suspect had been privately 'tipped' to look after me, kindly insisted on my eating a morsel of bread and cheese, and swallowing off the whole glass of ale. I must confess it was sound advice, and I felt much the better when I had done so.

From Castle Bellingham we trotted on to Dundalk, after leaving which the evening began to close in, and the air grew cold and frosty; and by the time Newtown Hamilton was reached—a dreary and desolate town, situated among the Fews mountains—I was cold, tired, and exhausted. We had changed our coachman at Dundalk, and the new driver knew not the poor little Joseph who sat behind him. And as we passed on stage after stage, the horses tired, the coachman cross and weary with flogging them up the steep hills by which the Fews mountains were then traversed, I have seldom felt more utterly desolate and down-hearted.

But the longest day must have an end; and at length we arrived at Armagh. I was stiff, hungry, cold, and tired; and, though I was an active little boy enough, I was wholly unable to get down off the coach by myself. The guard kindly lifted me down, and handed us over to the porter, who had come to meet us from the college.

Ned Grimes was the college porter. I remember him well to this day. He was a short, thick-set, strong little fellow, as hard as a nail, strong as an ox, and untiring as a steam engine. He was up to any amount of work which could be put upon him. He could clean sixty or seventy pairs of shoes of a night with as much ease as I could clean my master's boots, though he did not produce the same polish upon their surface; and he would have all ready for the little boys—who had no fag but him—on a Sunday or holiday morning. It would be hard to recapitulate the multifarious duties of Ned Grimes, but he performed them all cheerfully and well; and when struck by the boys, as he often was in somewhat rude fun, he would return blow for blow with a good-humoured severity that made his tormentors think twice before commencing an attack upon him again.

'Welcome to the college, young masters,' said Ned, addressing myself and brother in a loud cheery voice. But we were too cold and too tired to answer him in the same strain. And when he took our trunks upon his brawny shoulders, and trudged off lustily towards the college—talking all the way in a familiar manner peculiar to himself, but by no means offensive, of the jolly life we were now about to enter on—I could hold out no longer, and burst out crying.

'Ah, my poor little fellow,' said Ned kindly, 'I fear you are not hardened to these things yet; and maybe you have left a kind mother behind you, and are fretting after her; my own little chaps would do the same. But these wild lads at the college would only laugh at you if they saw you crying. So come along, and I'll bring you into the Doctor's own room, where all the kind ladies are, and to-morrow you may join the school.'

He led me accordingly into a warm and well-lighted room, where a large family, consisting chiefly of ladies, were collected round the tea-table; and having respectfully stated that the new young gentleman was too tired and cold to go to the schoolroom that night, he left me to the care of the kind family of the Doctor. I was given a cup of warm tea, and plenty of bread and butter; and immediately after, I became so sleepy from my long journey and exposure to the open air, that I could hold up my head no longer; so I was placed in bed—I knew not where or how—and slept, and dreamed of home.

I breakfasted with the Doctor and his family next morning; and after breakfast, I was taken by my kind-hearted master into the schoolroom. He examined me in several books—not one of which I had ever seen or heard of—and, finding that I knew nothing about them, he placed me in the lowest form, to begin at the beginning of the school.

My brother was placed in the fifth form, which in school life separated us necessarily a good deal from each other.

No sooner was my first lesson over, and the usual half-hour's play in the middle of the day commenced, than a boy, considerably bigger and older than myself, came up to me and civilly asked my name. I told him at once. He then asked me to join him in the playground, to which of course I assented; and we walked out together in a most confidential manner.

'Is it long since you left home?' enquired my new companion:—home was rather a sore subject with me just then, and I felt my eyes fill with tears. He perceived this, and said in a consolatory voice,

'Don't cry, don't cry, you will be very happy here; we are all so fond of new boys, and do all we can to please them.'

'Thank you,' returned I, 'but when one thinks of home, and all the kind people there, one can't help crying a little.'

'Of course, of course,' replied he, 'quite right and natural; all the boys do the same on first coming to school. And so you left a great many people behind that you were fond of?—you have some brothers I suppose?'

'O yes,' said I, 'I have three brothers; but it was not of them I was thinking.'

'Perhaps it was of your mother, or your sisters you were thinking?'

'Indeed it was,' replied I, and my tears flowed afresh.

'And how many sisters have you?' asked my kind and sympathizing friend.

'I have five,' I answered, 'and I love them very much.'

'Of course you do,' replied he; 'and tell me now, are they handsome girls? But first tell me what are their names? The name of the eldest is ——?'

Just at this moment I recollected the advice of the gentleman who had put the sugar in my tea at the breakfast at Ashbourne. So, affecting a very knowing smile, and putting my spread-out fingers to my nose in the well-known form which implies a superiority of wit and knowledge in him who does it over all his fellow-creatures, I answered with a wink,

'I think I know a trick worth two of that!'

The words were scarcely out of my mouth, or my hands down from my nose, when I received a tremendous kick behind, and a cuff on the side of the head which sent me spinning into the grass beside the walk.

'You infernal young scoundrel,' cried he in the utmost indignation, 'is it humbugging me you have been all this time? I'll teach you to humbug your betters!' And thereupon he gave me a most tremendous thrashing, vociferating all the time that 'he would teach me to humbug my betters.'

I need hardly say that I was as devoid of any intention to humbug him as the child unborn; and I fancied I was doing quite the right thing in carrying out the advice of my breakfast friend. It certainly cost me a severe beating; but it was some comfort that my sisters' names remained unknown all the time I was at school, though to this day I could never understand the importance which was laid upon this secret in almost every school in Ireland—and, for aught I know, in England too, at that date.

This rough treatment, so early commenced, soon initiated me into all the mysteries and 'rights' of the College of Armagh. The strictness with which these 'rights' were maintained and adhered to, by all parties, was one of the most remarkable features of the school. It was true they consisted of an ancient and unwritten code; but they were wonderfully well understood. Certain big boys in the school

were considered as the expounders of these rights; and when once a formal decision was given—after due reference to these parties—there was usually no appeal from their verdict. But the strange part of it was, that the masters and teachers were considered quite as much bound by the code of rights as we were ourselves; and the Doctor submitted to these rights and acknowledged them with a willingness which even at that time surprised me.

It was, no doubt, a rude, rough school, but it had stringent and wild codes of honour of its own. There was a constant affectation of manhood amongst the boys—carrying them so far that upon one occasion, the elder boys agreed to settle some quarrel which had arisen between them with the pistol, rather than the ordinary course of fighting it out with their fists. I well remember the mysterious purchase of the pistols, the buying at different shops of the powder and ball, and the whispering and grave deliberations of the seconds on this momentous occasion.

The intended duel was talked of and discussed amongst all the elder boys for at least a fortnight before it took place. Of course, it was kept a dead secret from the Doctor, and I doubt if he ever knew of it even to his dying day; as one of the main points in our code of honour—and one rigidly adhered to—was, never, under any circumstances, to inform upon a schoolfellow, no matter what his crime might be.

The duel at length came off with all the gravity of experienced performers. The spot chosen for the combat was an out-of-the-way corner of the playground, near some steps to a former landing, which bore the suggestive title of 'the marrow-bone door.' The principals were duly placed, the seconds retired the proper distance aside, and dropped a handkerchief as the signal for both parties to fire. The combatants fired precisely together, and then the two boys —who had really no enmity between themselves, but fought

out of vanity to ape this supposed manly pastime of the day —stared in real terror at each other, lest either should have hurt his adversary. Fortunately, however, neither party fell, or showed any symptom of being wounded. So they each declared themselves 'perfectly satisfied,' and a cordial reconciliation took place. It was considerably enhanced by one of the seconds finding a flattened bullet immediately behind the boy who had been placed against the marrow-bone steps!

It is remarkable how the introduction of one vicious boy into a school—conducted as this was upon somewhat republican principles—can change the whole current and tone of thought of boys not originally ill-disposed. We were a wild lot, it is true; but though we adhered rigidly to our rights, our code of honour was also strictly enforced. I had risen in a few years, by regular gradations, from the first to the fourth form, when, unfortunately, a new boy came to the school, who, had he been a Fenian or a Ribbonman, would have set the whole side of a country in a flame. He was an idle, bad, good-for-nothing boy; and, having been severely flogged more than once for his lessons (flogging was the order of the day if a boy failed in his task at the College of Armagh), he conceived a real hatred for the Doctor, whom he looked upon, and endeavoured to set forth amongst us, as a tyrant and a persecutor, whose aim and object was to injure and ill-treat the boys. He so far succeeded in establishing these sentiments against the really kind-hearted Doctor, that a series of annoyances of the most vexatious and perplexing character was planned, and set on foot to annoy him. The boys at Armagh had long had a fancy for dabbling in gunpowder experiments, and, upon more than one occasion, had scorched the skins off their own faces, and nearly blown the roof off the house, by accidental explosions which took place during the manufacture of their fireworks.

The new boy resolved to turn this fanciful peculiarity to the detriment and annoyance of the authorities. One of his contrivances was to make up small parcels of gunpowder, wrapped tightly in numerous folds of brown paper. These he placed at the back of the fire, amongst the coals which had been recently heaped on the grate, but which had not yet ignited. This performance he effected in play-hours, just as school was about to open; and explosion after explosion, to the amazement of all the assistants, was of course the result. This he called 'blowing up the ushers,' as the assistant teachers were then called; and he generally so contrived it that the explosion should take place just as the usher had gone to warm himself at the fire. Hitherto, however, he had confined his practice to the assistants; but having been soundly flogged by the Doctor for some piece of mischief or idleness, he intimated confidentially to some of the choice spirits whom he had seduced to join him, that he would certainly blow up the Doctor! He accordingly purchased about half a pound of gunpowder, and having wrapped it in brown paper and placed it behind the coals, just previous to the hour when the Doctor according to custom came into the school,—he retired to his desk, and gravely awaited the result.

The school bell rang for business soon after this bomb-shell had been deposited; and, as usual, the Doctor slowly entered the room, and took up his place with his back to the fire, and with his hands behind his back. He was of a literary turn of mind, and an author of some celebrity; and the whole of the school-business being somewhat distasteful to him, I suspect he often allowed his mind to wander far away from the annoyances of his position into the cultivated fields of a literary elysium, which he was so fully capable of enjoying.

Suddenly—in a moment—he was recalled to actual life,

and his position rudely forced upon his attention. A loud explosion took place, which violently burst open the door, and shattered every window in the large and lofty schoolroom. At the same time a volley of grape-shot—in the shape of small pieces of coal, aided by the severe concussion of the air—sent the Doctor flying into the midst of the schoolroom. He looked around in astonishment, not knowing in the least what had happened; but feeling his hands in pain, he looked at the palms, and found them blackened with the coal. Turning round rapidly, he perceived that the fire was blown about the floor, and at once the whole of the unworthy plot rushed upon his mind.

He looked round gravely upon the school, and said:

'Boys, which of you has done this?'

There was a dead silence. Gradually the absurdity of the whole scene forced itself upon the imagination of the boys, inclined as they were to make fun out of everything, and an almost universal titter ran through the school. The Doctor waited until the titter had subsided, and then firmly saying,

'I will stop all the holidays until I know who did this,' he walked out of the schoolroom.

I have already stated that the boys at Armagh were universally tenacious of what they termed the 'ancient rights of the school.' They submitted to those rights themselves without murmuring, although some of them were occasionally very severely exercised. Amongst these rights was the allowance of a half-holiday every Wednesday, or, if a premium had been obtained in Trinity College, Dublin, by any undergraduate who had been educated at the school, a whole holiday was granted. The right to these holidays had been the rule of the school from time immemorial, and the privilege was guarded by the boys with the utmost jealousy. It may, therefore, be supposed

that the Doctor's announcement met with no sympathy whatever. Had he appealed to our honour and good feeling, and said, 'Boys, this is a vile and dishonourable act towards one who has ever treated you kindly and fairly—an act quite unworthy of gentlemen. I know it is against your code to tell of each other, and therefore I do not ask you who did it; but I expect you will of yourselves punish the ungentlemanlike individual as he deserves,' I firmly believe we should have cheered the good old Doctor with all our might; and having seized the mischievous culprit, we should have made him run the gauntlet (our school punishment for any breach of our code), and 'licked' him to our heart's content. Indeed most of us would have been only too glad to have an opportunity of doing so consistently with our laws, and would have felt rejoiced at so honourable an escape from the predicament in which his pranks had placed us. But the Doctor made a fatal mistake in the course he now pursued; and, instead of enlisting the well-disposed upon his side, this unlucky announcement banded every boy against him. We were well aware it would be eternal disgrace for any boy to inform upon the evil-doer, and we knew he was utterly deficient in that generosity of character which would induce him to come forward and confess his own fault; but we considered we had a full right to our holidays, notwithstanding his vicious propensities.

But one injudicious act, even though well meant, will sometimes turn a whole people against a ruler. And so it was in this case. We considered it unjust in the Doctor to class us *all* as accomplices, and punish us as such, unless we sacrificed an acknowledged rule.

The whole bearings of this important case were fully discussed by the boys. The threatened infringement of our rights was looked upon as a most serious affair. The

head boys of the school sat day after day in deliberation on this knotty point; and to this hour I cannot look back without surprise upon the calm judicial spirit in which the whole case was taken up and fairly argued out, before any decision was arrived at.

At length the head boys gave out their final verdict;—that in threatening to stop the holidays, because we would not break through our well-known code and turn informers upon our schoolfellow, the Doctor had exceeded his power, and broken through the long-established rights of the school; and, although we deprecated the act which had been done, we would *not* give up the delinquent. A statement to this effect was written out upon a round piece of paper, and left, neatly folded and directed to the Doctor, on the table at which he usually sat.

This document was received on Tuesday morning. And as it was usual for him, on the breaking up of the school on each Tuesday evening, to announce whether the following day was to be a half or whole holiday, according as we might be entitled to either, the announcement of that evening was looked forward to—I suspect by both parties, but certainly on our side—with the utmost anxiety.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, the bell rang as usual, and the boys all stood up, preparatory to dismissal for the evening. The Doctor then announced, in a grave voice,

'Boys, there will be no holiday to-morrow.'

Not a word was spoken. The Doctor left the room in silence, instead of being cheered, as he usually was when a whole holiday was granted. We soon went in to dinner. Not a word was uttered during the meal; and it was evident to him as well as to ourselves that war had broken out between the parties. From that time, I regret to say, the boy whom we all knew to be mischievous and vicious,

became a popular hero amongst us. He was now completely in his element.

'I told you,' he cried, 'that the Doctor was a tyrant and oppressor, who delighted in harassing us by every act of injustice in his power. Look at what he now wants to do: to stop our holidays, one of the most ancient rights of the school. I, for one, will never submit to it. Let us rise up against it, and carry the war into his own quarters; and you may depend on it we will put him down.'

Irritated as we were at the moment by our supposed wrongs, these sentiments were loudly cheered, and an aggressive course was determined on. It happened, at this time, that one of the ushers had rendered himself very unpopular amongst the boys. He had 'reported' this young scoundrel on more than one occasion, and the boy had been flogged in consequence—a punishment which he richly deserved. That the usher should report him if he detected him in improper conduct was considered all fair and right amongst the boys. It was his acknowledged duty to do so; and no ill-will was ever entertained towards him for performing it. Not so, however, with this worthy, who had now become our hero. And possessing, as he did, the peculiar art of making us the avengers of his own private hatred, whilst we fancied we were performing a public duty, he soon turned the current of popular indignation against the unfortunate assistant.

In accordance with this tone of feeling, the assistant was denounced as an enemy to the rights of the school; and it was resolved to punish him by giving him a judicial beating. But inasmuch as he was a strong man, and we were well aware that the consequences of such an act, if the perpetrators were discovered, would be immediate expulsion from the school, he invented a plan for meeting all difficulties. He arranged, that in the evening, when the boys were preparing

Bagging an usher.

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Whilst he was engaged in the study of the sentence a linen clothes bag was suddenly popped over his head.

their lessons for the following day, a little boy should be sent up to the usher to ask the explanation of some Latin passage; and, whilst he was thus engaged, some boy, bolder than the rest, was to come behind, and put a bag with running strings attached over the head of the unfortunate assistant; and the strings being drawn tightly around his neck, his enemies were then to be let loose upon him, and thrash him to their heart's content.

This diabolical plan was shortly afterwards put into execution. A little boy, carefully kept ignorant of the intended assault, was sent up to the usher to ask him the explanation of a passage in Ovid; and, whilst he was engaged in the study of the sentence, a linen clothes-bag was suddenly popped over his head. Two other boys, at a little distance, immediately pulled tight the strings, which were made sufficiently long for the purpose, and, before the unfortunate man had an idea of the real position in which he was placed, every candle in the schoolroom was 'doused,' and shoes, candlesticks, dictionaries, school-books, and every kind of rubbish, were hurled at him by the dim light of the fire, till he became the centre of a storm of missiles. The wretched man, not knowing what had happened or was about to happen, shrieked in the agony of his terror, and having at last succeeded in tearing the bag off his head, he rushed from the schoolroom amidst the shouts of the boys and an increased storm of books and shoes, and disappeared like a flash of lightning!

'Now boys,' said our clever and malicious leader in a rapid voice, 'he is gone for the Doctor. Light all the candles again; gather up the shoes and dictionaries; and be all hard at work learning your lessons like mad!'

In a moment all set to work. Feet were slipped into every outlying shoe, no matter whose it might be, or whether it fitted or not; the dictionaries and books were

collected in the twinkling of an eye; the bits of candles, which were lying in every part of the room, were crammed into their sockets; and, in a surprisingly short time, every boy was hard at work at his own table or desk, with his hands up to his ears in an attitude of intense study; and a general hum of business, such as one hears in a busy crowded schoolroom, pervaded the whole assembly.

In less than five minutes the Doctor rushed into the room, with a heavy horsewhip in hand, followed by the unhappy usher as pale as death.

'What is all this?' cried the Doctor. 'Who has been guilty of this outrage?'

He was going to proceed in his denunciations of this most nefarious act, when he stopped short not two paces within the door.

'How is this?' said he, turning round to the usher behind him; 'I thought you told me the whole school was in an uproar: they seem all quiet enough, and minding their business as usual!'

The wretched man could scarcely speak a word; he was completely confounded and overcome. And to this day, if he be still alive, I have no doubt he looks back upon the whole scene as the hallucinations of a frightful dream.

There was nothing, however, to be done; he had not the faintest conception who had bagged him; and even the name of the innocent little boy who had been put forward as a stalking-horse, to capture him, had wholly escaped his memory.

No action was therefore taken in the case; but a more stringent determination than ever was arrived at by the Doctor to allow no holiday, until the perpetrator of the bomb-shell scene should be brought to justice.

CHAPTER II.

THE BARRING OUT.

WAR was now openly proclaimed. Plotting and conspiracies became the order of the day; lessons were neglected, and frequent floggings, not unaccompanied by angry feelings on both sides, were the result. At length another Tuesday came round, and again the Doctor announced there would be no holiday on Wednesday. The boys became highly exasperated; whether rightly or wrongly, they firmly believed that a deep injustice was being done them; and, after the most anxious consultation amongst the influential leaders of the school, it was resolved, that if another holiday was stopped there should be a 'barring out!'

A 'barring out' at school may appear a very small and foolish affair to some people now; but it was neither one nor the other to us then, nor did it prove either one or the other to the Doctor. We looked upon it as 'the last resort of a down-trodden and injured community!' and, to us, it assumed all the importance of a serious and desperate rebellion.

It was remarked that the mischievous young scamp who had brought all this trouble and anxiety upon the school, no longer appeared to take any active or leading part from the time that a 'barring out' was decided on. Forward as he was in all petty mischief under cover of our code of honour, so long as he knew that no boy would

betray him to the authorities, yet he shrank from the responsibility of open rebellion, from the consequences of which he foresaw he could not possibly escape. And having made some mean excuse, he—who had been the sole cause of the war—withdrew from our councils, and left the planning of the rebellion to the bolder and more daring spirits.

Up to this period I had not been taken much into council as to the issues of peace or war; but now, that war was practically declared, I was accepted as a volunteer—though only in the fourth form—and was one of the youngest who joined in the 'barring out.' The delight I then felt at the prospect of a rebellion was beyond anything I can describe, and indeed I may add, beyond anything I can now clearly understand. But I was convinced our cause was just. I had taken no part whatever in the bomb-shell assault upon the Doctor; I had in fact entirely disapproved of it, and would most gladly, if I could, have dragged the perpetrator to condign punishment—for I disliked him personally as much as I disapproved of his proceedings. My feelings were generally participated in by the leaders of the 'barring out;' but we all felt so deeply indignant that the most valued of our ancient privileges should be wrenched from us as punishment for a crime of which we were not guilty, that we finally resolved—with a feeling of patriotism which it is not easy to describe—that if one more holiday was stopped we should 'bar out' on that day week.

O'Connell used to say that 'Ireland was the most justice-loving country in the world,' and also that she was 'a country of combinations.' And certainly it does seem as if there was not only a keen love of justice, but also a propensity to rebellion, circulating in the blood of almost every Irishman. I cannot otherwise account for the universal joy which the prospect of a 'rising' occasioned amongst us all.

We could not even claim the excuse of being sprung from an oppressed race. We were all Protestants; all of us amongst those who are now called the 'dominant class.' We were all gentlemen's sons, most of us landlords' sons, and as such we had never suffered under any obnoxious land code; and with the exception of this one act of doubtful justice on the part of the Doctor, I am not aware that any of us had ever suffered an injustice in our lives. And yet there is no denying that our delight was unbounded whenever we thought of a rebellion.

The momentous day again came round, and again the Doctor announced that there would be no holiday! Not a word was spoken by the boys; he left the room in silence; and after dinner we assembled in our usual place of meeting to organise an immediate 'rising.' We had been so long plotting it beforehand that our plans were quickly matured, and it now only remained to put them into active operation, What fun! a rising in a just and righteous cause! A 'barring out' that would maintain inviolate the ancient rights of the school, and hand them down unsullied to posterity! We felt certain that our names would be emblazoned in all future records of the school as the successful leaders in a glorious revolution. Our enthusiasm—which was now at its height—had, perhaps, been somewhat stimulated by a little whisky punch which had secretly been introduced into our meeting, and with which, when business was over, we sat down to recruit our exhausted spirits. Then and there we resolved to conquer or die!

But, however absurd the object of our rebellion might be, our preparations were by no means contemptible. There had been one or two previous, but abortive attempts at a riot which had lasted only a few hours—in one of which, however, the poor usher's hand had been nearly chopped

off with a hatchet;* but these had been speedily put down. Now we firmly resolved to enter upon a 'barring out,' which should last for days or weeks, if necessary, until we gained our sacred cause.

The most active preparations were immediately set on foot. Rope ladders were made with grappling irons attached, to enable us to scale the walls of the play-ground in the dark. And, having thus secretly effected our liberty, we made extensive purchases in the town. An enormous quantity of bread—sufficient to last our garrison for a month at least—was provided, and loaf after loaf was pitched over the wall into the play-ground. Some large cheeses were also purchased as a food that would keep for any length of time. Abundance of whisky found its way in. Some wine was also secured, and several rounds of salt beef, ready cooked, were bespoken from different butchers. Some small kegs of beer were also with much difficulty landed inside the wall; and our preparations for a siege were crowned by the purchase of seven or eight pistols, a few bullets, some flasks of gunpowder, and a quantity of 'sparrow-hail'—a name given to the smallest kind of shot in use. We also arranged that some tubs should be prepared for getting in a supply of water on the night of the actual rising.

The collection of these numerous stores, and the stowage of them in safety, was a labour of considerable difficulty and some danger. We hid them chiefly in caves which we had excavated in the playground for the purpose. It was necessary that every article we required should be got over the play-ground wall at night, or rather during the long dark evenings. The wall was twelve feet high, so that this

* The gentleman who so nearly effected the amputation of the usher's hand is still alive; no one less likely *now* to be accused of such a performance; but should these pages ever meet his eye, he will not fail to remember the event.

was no light task, and the danger of detection was imminent. Our code of honour stood by us on this occasion; and not a single boy 'peached,' though all knew perfectly what was going forward. I have no reason to think that the authorities had any precise idea of our intention.

The arrangements being now completed, twenty-four volunteers were selected to take part in the rebellion; and they were formally sworn 'on their honours' to stand by their leaders, and never to surrender as long as their leaders held out. We arranged to bar out in a large dormitory, situated at the top of the house and in the western wing of the building; and our plan was—that when we went up to bed in the evening and were, as usual, locked in by the usher, we should wrench back the bolt of the lock, let out some little boys, who were unfit to take part in the enterprise, admit some big boys who slept in another room, take in our supplies—which had been brought up from the playground cave to the head of the stairs; and, all being ready, on a given signal, hammers and nails were to be openly and freely used, the doors fastened firmly with iron spikes on the inside, the banner of rebellion raised, and war declared.

Such were our plans; and they were by no means feebly executed. At nine o'clock the boys ascended gravely and silently to their dormitory. The usher waited, walking up and down the room, until he saw us all undressed and in bed. He then took away the candle, locked the door, and left us, as he thought, quietly settled for the night. No sooner were his footsteps heard on the lowest landing place of the stairs, than every boy leaped from his bed. It was a moonlight night, and there were neither shutters nor curtains to our windows; so we had abundance of light for our operations. In a few minutes each boy was completely dressed—the bolt of the lock was silently forced back with

tools we had prepared for the purpose—the little boys were quietly slipped outside, and our provisions as noiselessly introduced—a few of the larger boys were let in from an adjoining dormitory, out of which they had escaped by the same means as we had opened our door. Mattresses, three deep, were crammed against the door, and beds were dragged into the vicinity of the entrance to prop them up; and when all these preparations were completed, the pistols were carefully loaded with handfuls of sparrow-hail, and we gravely assured each other that, though we were most anxious to avoid taking away any man's life, yet, if attacked, we would defend ourselves and our rights to the last drop of our blood!

'Well now, this *is* what I call fun!' shouted one of the boys at the top of his voice, wholly unable to contain himself. We had scarcely slept for a fortnight before in anticipation of this very hour; and now it was come at last. We could hold no longer, and we burst out into a ringing cheer!

'Strike home, boys, for your lives!' shouted the leader of the party, the moment his voice could be heard. In an instant a dozen hammers were dashed against the heads of a dozen enormous nails, and the door was made as secure as iron spikes could possibly fasten it.

'Up with the mattresses against the door,' again shouted our leader. 'Let three rows of bedsteads be put against them, nail the bedsteads firmly to the floor so that they cannot possibly be pushed in, and let two of our steadiest hands lie down under the bedsteads close to the door with their pistols cocked, and be ready to fire when I give the signal.'

These orders were immediately obeyed; and in less than five minutes we were all quiet again, trembling and panting

with excitement, but ready for instant action at the word of our leader.

Scarcely half a minute had elapsed after our preparations were completed, when we heard the step of the usher—startled by the noise of the hammers above—hastily ascending the staircase. He could almost have heard our hearts beating within if he had listened. He applied the key to the door, but the key-hole had been tightly plugged.

'Let me in,' said he in a trembling voice.

'Not until we obtain our rights,' returned our leader in a firm steady tone.

'Boys, this is dreadful work,' replied the usher; 'I beseech of you to let me in. Let us talk a little over this matter, before I call the Doctor. I will speak to him myself in your favour—and, perhaps, something might be done.'

'Never,' cried our leader. 'Never, until we obtain our rights: we have tried fair means long enough. We will not open the door unless the holidays are at once restored.'

The usher perceived in a moment that a rebellion—which for some time past he had half suspected was brewing—had now openly broken out. The rebels had taken the field; so he attempted no further parley, but instantly went off and reported the case to the Doctor.

We had no means of knowing the precise effect produced upon the really amiable and excellent Doctor by the sudden announcement of his assistant; but I believe it was a very painful one. I think he had some reason to doubt whether the course he had adopted was the most judicious; but, having so far pledged himself, he now felt bound to adhere to it. He told me afterwards, that he had long suspected some serious mischief was being concocted, from the manner in which the boys collected in little knots, and dispersed as

soon as he appeared; but he had no idea whatever that so formidable a rebellion was on the point of breaking out in the school.

The Doctor, however, was by no means deficient in personal courage or pluck; so he summoned the gardener, whom he directed to arm himself with a heavy hatchet. The porter, Ned Grimes, was not long in putting in an appearance with an iron crowbar in his hand; and all three came steadily up the staircase. A loud knock was heard at the door of the dormitory. We all knew perfectly well that the Doctor himself was outside; no one made any reply.

'Boys,' said the Doctor calmly, 'I fear you are acting very unwisely. I presume you are, what you call "barring out;" but you must know, upon calm reflection, that such an attempt is perfectly futile; I have men beside me with hatchets and iron crowbars who can force in the door in a moment. If you open it now quietly I will endeavour to forget what has happened; and perhaps we may be able to make arrangements for the future which will satisfy all parties. If you refuse, I will have the door instantly broken open by force, and you may then take the consequences of your folly.'

If the Doctor had stopped at the conclusion of his first sentence, and had waited for an answer to his appeal—no matter what his ultimate determination to force his way in might be—I believe it was not unlikely the door would have been opened to him on the spot, as, although we were deeply irritated, we all bore feelings towards him of personal respect and regard. But his threat of breaking open our door so easily, with his hatchets and iron crowbars, which we had taken such pains to barricade, and which we now believed to be as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar, wounded our pride and aroused our anger. Our better

Shooting Ned Grimes.

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'Break in the door,' cried the Doctor to his men.

feelings were driven back, and we determined on 'no surrender.'

'No surrender!' 'no surrender!' ran in a whisper round the room.

'Sir,' said our leader respectfully, 'we mean you no harm, and we bear you no ill-will; but we consider we have been unjustly deprived of our rights; our holidays have been stopped. We cannot, and will not surrender, unless you promise to restore them to us.'

'Break in the door!' cried the Doctor to his men. Hitherto he had kept his temper well, but now he had evidently lost it—and no wonder.

'Look to yourselves outside,' shouted our leader; 'we have fire-arms, and we will use them.'

With a single stroke of his heavy hatchet, the gardener smashed to pieces the lower panel of the door, whilst Ned Grimes—who knew the boys thoroughly and saw we were bent on mischief—dashed his crowbar into the opening, and endeavoured to wrench the door off its hinges.

'Smash it all to bits!' shouted Ned at the top of his voice, as he worked with a will at the heavy crowbar; and thoroughly enjoying the fun, made the door creak with his exertions. 'We'll show the young gentlemen for once in their lives what a man can do when he goes at it!'

Again another stroke of the heavy hatchet sent the second panel flying in splinters against the mattress; and then the steady voice of our leader was heard as he said distinctly,

'Give them the sparrow-hail in the legs; maybe the shower will be a little too hot for them—fire!'

Bang went one of the pistols right through the opening which the gardener had made in the panel. Ned leaped high in the air, and, with a loud scream, sent the crowbar flying from his hands. A dead silence ensued. The awful sound

of fire-arms in such a place, discharged in real anger, produced an overwhelming effect. But the silence was only momentary. A tremendous scuffle was soon heard upon the stairs as of persons hurrying away—the hatchet was dashed loosely against the door—the crowbar fell with a crash upon the boards; and the gardener wildly shouting 'Murder!' 'Murder!' (as he saw the blood oozing through Ned's stockings) rushed passed the Doctor down the stairs.

'Give it to him in the back of his calves!' shouted our leader; and another volley of sparrow-hail took the gardener behind, and tumbled him head-foremost down the first flight of the stairs.

Ned Grimes, who, though startled at first, was really as stout as a lion, refused to budge an inch, and muttering in a voice of his own, which we all knew perfectly well, he growled out,

'Well, no matter; my shins won't forget ye for some time to come I'm thinking; but see if I don't make the bones of every one of ye sore enough for this job yet.'

A roar of laughter from inside followed Ned's threat; in fact it was a great relief to us all, as we were by no means certain that, in the excitement of the moment, we had not killed one or other of the party on the stairs. Ned was going to lift the crowbar—though his legs were full of sparrow-hail—and to set to work again at the door; but the Doctor told him to desist; and it was with no small feelings of gratification that we heard them both go down the stairs. The gardener picked himself up as well as he could, shouting 'Murder' until he reached the bottom flight, and, probably, for some time after.

But the events of the night were not yet over. No doubt we had repelled the first attack with considerable loss to the enemy, and we heartily congratulated each other on our

success. Hands were warmly shaken, and we renewed our protestations to stand by each other to the last. But we did not forget our defences: the bedsteads were removed in a twinkling—fresh boards, wrenched from the backs of spare bedsteads, were nailed across the breaches the enemy had made with the hatchet—the mattresses were placed anew against the broken panels, so that we could fire from behind them whilst they would stop any fire from the enemy; and, replacing the bedsteads, firmly nailed to the floor again, we awaited in anxiety any further attempt upon our citadel.

We did not wait long. The gardener, upon a close examination of the calves of his legs, found that the hail, though exceedingly painful and smarting him much at the time, had only entered skin-deep, fired as it was from an overcharged and short-barrelled pistol. Moreover he was somewhat twitted by Ned for his hasty and inglorious retreat. So, resolving to recover if he could his character for courage, he commenced, along with Ned, reconnoitering the premises, in the hope—if they could manage it safely—of renewing the attack upon the door. They accordingly procured a high barrel with one end open, which, with some difficulty, they carried to the top of the landing. We could not conceive what they were about, as we heard them laboriously rolling the barrel up stairs. But they soon let us know their plan; for, standing inside the barrel so as completely to ward off our shot from their legs, they again smashed in our defences like egg-shells, and Ned Grimes began, once more, to apply his crowbar to the door; but a fresh discharge made him drop the weapon as if it were red-hot iron, and sent him and his companion again growling away. Our marksmen had perceived 'the dodge' of the barrel; and, aiming a little above its topmost rim, had peppered their hands and sides, instead of their legs as before.

During the whole of that eventful night, repeated skirmishes took place between the besiegers and besieged. The engagement had now become general, and we kept up a continuous fire upon the enemy the moment we heard footsteps upon the landing. At length the attack was abandoned, and the enemy seemed content to abide the result, and endeavour to starve us out.

It is all very well to look back upon this and call it a mere boyish frolic; but, in truth, it was fast assuming a very serious aspect, and both parties, beginning to feel that the contest was of doubtful issue, exerted their energies accordingly. Having silenced the attack at the door, and placed sentinels with cocked pistols in their hands—giving them stringent orders to fire forthwith through the broken panels the moment they heard footsteps upon the landing—we now turned our attention to the means of a lengthened resistance. In doing so, we found to our dismay, that water was the only article in which we were really deficient. All washing was immediately prohibited; water and beer were served out to the garrison duly measured, and only in as small quantities as was consistent with the quenching of natural thirst. Of provisions we had abundance, for at least a fortnight or three weeks; but the water we calculated could scarcely hold out three days. We made the best of the matter, however; and taking care always to keep sentinels at the door and windows, and at every point where a sudden attack could possibly be made, we endeavoured to pass the time in a jolly idle way. Lessons of course we had none; and that, at least, was something gained. Books had not been taken into account in laying in our stores, so jokes and jibes and plans and anticipations for the future held sway amongst us. But it was very plain to each of us, though not admitted by any, that anxious thoughts and perplexing doubts as to how all this wild work would

end rendered it, in our inmost thoughts, very bad 'fun' indeed.

The Doctor had retired from the contest immediately after the first repulse; but, having gone to consult the Sovereign (as he was called) of the town of Armagh and some of the other magistrates, it was resolved to apply for the military to quell the riot which the 'College boys' had raised. A requisition was accordingly sent to the officer in command for a company of soldiers, the mere appearance of whom it was supposed would terrify us into submission; but the commanding officer had a keener knowledge of human nature than either the Doctor or the Sovereign, and on learning the nature of the duty for which the soldiers were required, he positively refused to furnish them. 'Those young scamps,' he promptly replied, 'will fire their sparrow-hail into the men's faces, and put out the eyes of half the regiment, whereas you well know I can neither run away nor return their fire. I will take upon myself the responsibility of positively refusing soldiers for such a duty as endeavouring to frighten those young scapegraces; and, moreover, I tell you plainly they would only laugh at such an idea, and perhaps commence to fire bullets, instead of sparrow-hail, at my men.'

The officer was not far wrong in his estimate of the probable conduct of the rebel forces.

The excitement of the first night's attack, and the arrangements of the following day, had kept us all employed both in mind and body; but no attack having been made during the course of the second night, and being left during the following day entirely to our own resources, it may well be supposed that time began to hang heavily on the hands of four-and-twenty boys—shut up in one room, and 'with no fighting to keep them alive.' As to books, I have already stated we had none; and even had we such, reading was

out of the question. We amused ourselves, therefore, by tormenting every person who passed along the road—which our dormitory completely commanded—leading into the town of Armagh. Some of the boys who were adepts in the art of slang, kept up a constant fire of that weapon of annoyance upon everyone, high or low, whose avocations compelled them to pass along that road. The passengers at last became justly irritated at this very doubtful species of fun; and some of them, of the lower sort, began to pelt us with stones as we leaned out of the open windows. A council of war was immediately held to consider what should be done to the stone-throwers; and the majority were of opinion that we owed it to our dignity to fire upon anyone who assaulted us. Accordingly the next volley of stones hurled against us by the indignant passengers was returned with interest from the dormitories, and a shower of sparrow-hail fell thickly around the assailants. In a short time a rumour ran through the town 'that the College boys were firing on the people, and had shot several of them as they went to market.' It must be admitted that the rumour was partially true; as, though the sparrow-hail did not do much damage at the distance from which we fired, yet it was rather startling; and the stoutest amongst the crowd by no means liked to see a pistol fired right at him, followed immediately by a shower of small shot around his person.

The contest between the passengers and ourselves soon became so vigorous that a complete blockade took place at that entrance into the town. It happened to be market-day; and, having voted that everyone who passed the road must necessarily be our enemy, we fired promiscuously at all, no matter what their calling might be. There were many respectable people, who, although they saw the crowd, and heard upon enquiry that 'the College boys were firing on the people,' yet could not bring themselves to believe that there

was really any danger. And, accordingly, pushing their way through the crowd, they walked gravely past across the now unoccupied space opposite the college windows. But the delight of the boys was to undeceive these unsuspecting innocents, and no sooner had they attempted to 'run the blockade,' than three or four pistol-shots, fired in quick succession, and accompanied by a shower of small shot falling around them, immediately dispelled their illusion. There was something irresistibly ludicrous in seeing persons walk gravely into the open space, with a defiant air, as if 'they would like to see who would touch them;' and then, when the volley came from the College boys, and the shot began to fall thick around them, draw their coat up about their ears, and rush past, amidst roars of laughter, not only from us, but also from the crowd of lookers-on.

An incident occurred in the course of the second night, which contributed to afford us some amusement. The gardener managed to send up a letter to the boys, stating that he was sorry he had gone against us in the beginning, and that he would prove the sincerity of his repentance by supplying us with water, if we would lower down a vessel. Water was the only thing of which we stood in need; we therefore broke a hole in the floor over one of the dormitories below, so as to let down the vessel which the gardener promised to fill. We had our suspicions, however, and did not quite trust his good faith. So we placed guards over the hole with cocked pistols, to be ready for action if occasion arose. The moment we let down our vessel, the gardener made a tug at the rope, and endeavoured to snatch it out of our hands, but the guards were too quick for him, and a shower of sparrow-hail, fired right down upon his head and hands, sent him off again howling with pain.

At length on the third day we became seriously in want of water; and, though we scarcely confessed it to ourselves

or each other, yet we certainly began to wish that some compromise could be effected. Whilst these thoughts were anxiously passing through our minds, the Sovereign of the Town appeared opposite our windows, with a flag of truce in the form of a white handkerchief in his hand, and asked us could he be the medium of any communication with the Doctor.

We replied, that if our rights were granted, we would submit immediately.

'But,' said he, 'what punishment do you expect for the outrageous proceedings of the last three days? You cannot suppose that such conduct can be passed over by the Doctor?'

We replied that he might do as he pleased as to punishment, but that we would never yield our rights.

'Well,' returned the Sovereign, 'I come authorised to make a proposition: the Doctor cannot pass over what has happened; but if you will now surrender at discretion, and submit every one of you to be well flogged, and leave the question of the holidays to the Doctor himself and his own kindness of feeling towards you, I will guarantee that none of you shall be expelled, or any further punishment inflicted for conduct, that, if pressed against you, would send every one of you to gaol, and probably to the tread-mill.'

The idea of being sent to the tread-mill for our pranks had never, strange to say, occurred to any of us, and it now alarmed us not a little. So we asked for an hour to consider, and this having been granted, we retired to discuss the terms which had been offered. Much angry altercation followed. Some were for holding out to the last. Others thought the Doctor would never give in about the holidays, and that the present proposition was only a trick to get us into his power. But the majority were of opinion that it was an honourable and *bonâ fide* offer. And as it was im-

possible, from want of water, that we could hold out for twenty-four hours longer, it would be well to close with the proposal. These better counsels prevailed; and when the Sovereign of the Town again appeared before us, we told him we would accept the terms.

I have seldom felt more ashamed than when we issued, one by one, from behind the barricades in the dormitory. We had fastened the door so tightly with nails, that we could not open it from the inside, and the gardener's hatchet and Ned Grimes' crowbar had again to be brought into requisition. The Doctor, and his wife and several members of his family, all stood at the head of the stairs, looking very solemn and grave, to see us emerge from our fortress. We came out singly through the narrow opening which had been made—unwashed, uncombed, dirty and ragged, and with eyes red and blood-shot, having scarcely slept from the commencement of the barring out. Not a word was spoken; we passed slowly down the stairs, and then we all assembled in the schoolroom below. A vast pile of birch rods heaped upon the table was the first thing which met our view; and, then and there, we were each stripped in turn, and being held by Ned Grimes and the gardener, neither of whom could conceal their delight at the turn matters had now taken, we were flogged to the heart's content even of the gardener himself!

The holidays were never afterwards stopped.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY LIFE.

MANHOOD leads to manhood's thoughts and manhood's ways; and before I had left school I had grown to be almost a man. I was very happy at Armagh during the last two years of my stay. The barring out had cleared the college of all the troublesome spirits, and after a year or two only sixteen or seventeen boys remained. The Doctor therefore dismissed several of his assistants, and I being now high up, and having entered upon the responsible position of 'Head of the school'—that is, the highest in the head form—I saw much of the kind old Doctor and his family. Nothing could exceed his attention to me, and to the few other boys who remained with him, and I often deeply regretted the pain and annoyance our previous misconduct must have caused him. He, however, seldom alluded to it, and though he knew I was one of the rebels on that occasion, yet he forgave me with a frankness and generosity for which I shall ever feel grateful, and which contrasted strongly with the bitter feelings of animosity which had been entertained towards him—not certainly by me—but by some of those who had left.

At length it became my turn to leave, and having studied assiduously during the last year of my school days under the special tuition of the Doctor himself, I took a warm and friendly farewell of the kind old man and his family. Immediately after leaving I entered the University, and took

my place as an undergraduate in old Trinity College, Dublin.

Having been born a younger son, I soon began to feel that I ought to do something for myself. My father, a brother of the late Lord Ashtown, lived in the country, surrounded with all the luxuries and refinements of a highly educated and polished gentleman: so that while residing in his house, as a young man, I lacked neither amusements nor society; and I passed a pleasant time between home and my university career. But I always felt that this could not and ought not to last; and in my secret heart I resolved, if possible, to obtain some employment suitable to my natural tastes, and which at the same time might afford an opportunity of a useful and active life. I had long set my heart upon the profession of an agent, as being the most suitable, in its higher branches, to my capacities, and as likely to afford the greatest opportunity of being useful in my generation; and though I did not announce my intention, yet I lost no opportunity of acquiring information which might qualify me for such an office. Meantime I passed steadily through my University course, living sometimes in Dublin, and sometimes at my father's place in the country.

These were the days of O'Connell's supremacy; and all Ireland, and England too, rang with his fame. His usual habit at that period, during term time, was, to walk home from the 'Four Courts'—the Irish courts of law—with an immense gathering of wild and ragged followers at his back. These he called, in jest, his police; and 'O'Connell's police' became, for a short time, one of the institutions of Dublin. But the College young men could never be forced into an acknowledgment of their authority, and the consequence was that repeated rows took place between the parties.

One of the rules this strange police insisted on establish-

ing was, that all those walking in the streets should take off their hats as O'Connell passed by on his triumphant return from the courts; and anyone who refused was mercilessly mobbed, and his hat knocked off or forced down over his eyes. In general, for peace sake, most of the passers-by took this new order of things good-humouredly, and raised their hats rather than submit to the unpleasant consequences of a refusal. But the College lads generally resisted this homage; so that a fight was almost certain to take place whenever they and O'Connell's police chanced to meet in the streets.

It happened one evening that a young college friend and I were walking down one of the main streets of Dublin, when O'Connell and his police appeared in view. We consulted for a moment whether we should cross over to the other side of the street and thus avoid a collision, but we considered this would be '*infra dig.*' And we therefore kept our course, resolving not to take off our hats.

'Hats off! hats off!' shouted the ragged police who preceded 'the Liberator' as soon as we approached; but we did not acknowledge the order, and continued to walk steadily on. In a moment we were attacked, and sundry attempts were made to force our hats over our eyes, or knock them off in the street. My companion however—a very powerful young man—gave two or three of the foremost of these 'policemen' such a hearty smash in the face that they kept their distance for a little, and we walked by O'Connell in safety. I well remember his smile as he nodded good-humouredly to us as we passed him, and I must say it was one of approval rather than otherwise at our refusal to do him homage. No sooner, however, had we got completely to the rear—O'Connell never allowed his police to commit any violence in his immediate presence—than a large party detached themselves on special duty,

and followed us with a full resolve to force us into compliance. We continued to walk rapidly towards home, but we soon heard the double-quick footsteps of a number of men behind us, and again the cry of 'Hats off!' resounded through the streets. It had a new and most unpleasant effect upon the nerves to find oneself pursued by a pack of hungry-looking ragged men—the scum of the populace of Dublin (there were no Poor Laws in those days)—who were determined to force us into compliance with what we considered a deep indignity.

'Hold on,' whispered my young friend to me: 'we may get home before they become too many for us.' So we held on still, and refused to take off our hats.

A violent blow in the back of the neck which sent me staggering forward was the reply of one of the party to my companion's whispered suggestions; but it was scarcely given when the man who gave it was laid flat on his back, bleeding and almost senseless, by a blow in the face from my friend. After this, for some little time, they kept a more respectful distance, but they still followed us shouting 'Hats off!' and increasing in numbers as we proceeded. We were frequently assailed, but the moment we turned round, drawing our clenched fists for a blow, the ragged policemen fell back, having evidently a keen recollection of the punishment which the chief of their police had received a few minutes before.

At length, however, the party became reinforced by bolder members of this wild constabulary, and we began to feel, as they pressed closer and closer upon us, that we had no chance of reaching home in safety; and resolving, if we could, to make a stand until some relief might be afforded, we rushed up a flight of stone steps, outside a gentleman's door, and presenting our front to the crowd,

we showed that we were determined to resist any further aggression to the utmost.

There were no Metropolitan Police, if I recollect right, in those days, and if there were, none certainly came to our assistance ; and in a wonderfully short time the street was filled with a motley crowd of the very worst roughs of Dublin, who came running from every quarter to take part in their favourite pastime of a row. Twice, a vigorous and direct attack was made upon our fortress ; but partly from the determined resistance of my young friend, who forced back his assailants, staggering amongst the crowd by the dint of his powerful blows, and partly from the advantageous nature of our position the enemy was repulsed with loss, and blood flowed freely from our enemies. At length I bethought me of seeking admission to the gentleman's house, on the steps of which we were, and I knocked loudly at the door. It was opened immediately.

'Let us in,' cried I. 'Let us in, or this mob will murder us.'

'Sir,' replied the man in a hissing voice, and with his teeth clenched and grinning, 'I hate the rascals ten times as much as ever you can do, but this is Lord Norbury's house, and the gentleman within is old, and those villains would pull it down about his ears if I let you in, should they find out whose house it is ; and so you must only fight them as best you can.' And before I could answer a word he slammed the door in my face !

But the act of the man had not been unobserved by the mob ; and seeing now that all chance of our retreat was cut off, they resolved to make a final rush upon our citadel and tear us down from it. This was soon effected. The strongest and boldest amongst them drew up two deep before us, and with a wild shout, or rather scream, went at us. In a moment we were surrounded, our hats knocked

off, and we ourselves hurled violently into the middle of the street. I got off with a bloody nose and the loss of one of my shoes, and my friend with a split ear; but our hats were carried off by our assailants as trophies of war, and were set on high on broomsticks, whilst the victorious 'police' of the Liberator marched off shouting and hurraying with their prize. Whether they laid the hats at O'Connell's feet or not I never heard: probably not, as we never saw them after.

Such was Dublin in my College days. Lord Anglesea was then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and in the midst of a hundred scenes similar to that which I have just described, levees, drawing-rooms, castle balls, and private entertainments, in all of which I freely joined, flowed on, and people never thought of these outrages but as passing trifles, whilst the pleasures and business of life proceeded as if all was going on in the natural course of things.

In the country parts of Ireland, the same wild ways, though in a different and more dangerous form, prevailed. The predominant idea amongst the peasantry at that time was—and still to a certain extent is—that 'a big war' was coming, and in preparation for this the 'taking up arms' was one of the most frequent outrages. Many gentlemen living in remote districts, lost their lives in defence of their arms, and in not a few cases the assailants were shot down in their attempt to take them. My father's residence was in the Queen's County about three miles from Portarlington, and I well remember how in disturbed times, when several murders had been committed in the neighbourhood, we habitually took our arms with us into the dining-room, and eat our meals with our loaded pistols on the table beside us, and our guns leaning against the chimney-piece. It is surprising, when one gets accustomed to it, how little this affects the appetite or weighs upon the mind. It went on

with us as a matter of course, and without the least feeling of uneasiness or apprehension affecting our spirits or our daily life.

A remarkable instance of a successful raid to take up fire-arms occurred about this time.* My eldest brother lived on his estate at Kilmorony, in the south-east portion of the Queen's County. His house was large, and surrounded by extensive grounds, so that no one could approach it without passing through at least half a mile of the 'demesne.' It was a Sunday afternoon, and my brother had gone to church at Athy, leaving his wife, Lady Helena Trench, and one of my sisters and their several children, at home. He had taken his men-servants with him, so that none but women and children remained in the house.

My sister was sitting in the drawing-room, a little before dinner on this fine summer's evening, her children playing around her, when her attention was attracted by observing one of the children standing in a fixed and frightened manner near the door. She looked up immediately, and saw a man, who had so quietly opened the door that she had not observed his entrance, standing and looking in with a large blunderbuss in his hand. My sister and he stared for a moment at each other.

'We want arms,' said the man in a husky coarse voice 'we don't want to hurt anyone if we can help it, but we want arms, and must get them.'

My sister's nerve did not fail her in the least. She rose quietly from her seat, took one of her little children by the hand, and going towards the door where the man was standing, she said,

'I am not the lady of the house; she is up stairs; I will go and call her.'

The man seemed a little abashed by a bearing so different

* I think this happened about the year 1830.

from what he probably expected. He made no reply, but followed my sister up-stairs.

She walked straight into Lady Helena's room, who at that moment was washing her hands before dinner; she was followed by the man with the blunderbuss.

'This man says he wants arms,' said my sister, addressing Lady Helena, 'and he says he must get them.'

'Let him wait a little until I have dried my hands,' replied Lady Helena calmly, 'and I will get them for him.'

She continued the operation of drying her hands as she would have done on the most ordinary occasion, and then slowly led the way into her husband's dressing-room, and pointing to some guns which were locked in a case over the fireplace, she told the man that those were the only arms in the house.

'The case is locked,' observed the man. 'Give me the key.'

'I have not got it,' replied Lady Helena. 'Mr. Trench is from home, and has the key with him.'

The man tore the holdfasts of the case out of the wall, and without saying anything more, or doing any further damage, although there were silver forks and spoons laid out in abundance on the table in the dining-room which he could have carried off with perfect ease, he walked away with his prize of arms and disappeared.

The whole thing was done so quickly and so quietly, that none of the female servants knew anything of what had happened. One of them, however, afterwards observed five men, all armed, assembling as it were from different stations outside the house, and walking away together.

Such was the state of the country at the time of which I speak, and many of the resident gentlemen in Queen's County, Carlow, and Kilkenny were accustomed to ride

armed to the cover's side, and to hunt all day with their pistols in their pockets, lest they should be attacked going home in the evening.

During all this time my earnest endeavours were turned towards the acquisition of knowledge, which, in addition to my classical and scientific course through College, would tend to fit me for the profession I had set my heart on to follow; and after some time I exerted myself much, without any emolument, in the improvement of the dwellings and farms of the tenants on my brother's estate. In course of time, I found myself a married man, settled in the county of Tipperary, not far from Cangort Park, the residence of a much loved and valued uncle, from whose vast experience and knowledge of country life I derived many and lasting advantages.

Master Ribbonmans Collar.

Master Ribbonmans Scarf.

Master Ribbonmans Belt.

LONGMANS & Cº LONDON.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIBBON CODE.

THERE are few who have not heard of the Ribbon Societies of Ireland; those dark and mysterious confederacies, which, springing up from time to time in different localities, have spread terror and dismay into the hearts of both rich and poor, which have done so much to discourage the influx of capital into Ireland, and to promote the absenteeism of hundreds of wealthy proprietors, who would be only too glad to be allowed to reside upon their Irish estates, and in the midst of their Irish tenantry, could they do so in peace and safety.

But the terrible Ribbon Code is too formidable for most men to face, who have the means of living elsewhere, and who are not bound by any peculiar ties to Ireland. It is the fashion to blame absentees; but can they always be justly blamed? It is a fact, the bitter truth of which has been felt and can be attested by many, that those who have been most earnest and anxious for the improvement of their estates, have come most frequently under the ban of the Ribbonmen; whilst the careless, spendthrift, good-for-nothing landlord, who hunts, and shoots, and drinks, and runs in debt, who even exacts the most exorbitant rents from his tenants, provided only he does not interfere with their time-honoured customs of subdividing, squatting, conacre, and reckless marriages, may live in peace and careless indolence on his estate, in high favour with the

surrounding peasantry, and with no fear or danger of being ever disturbed by a Ribbonman.

It is not my intention to enter at present upon any dissertation on this curious and strange phenomenon; neither is it my intention to enter into any analysis of the causes which produced this state of things. We must look back into the history of Ireland for these. Would that some abler hand than mine would investigate and lay bare the truth! My present purpose is only to deal with facts, and to tell of scenes and occurrences which have from time to time come under my immediate observation.

The effects of the Ribbon Code were more keenly felt in Ireland some fifteen or twenty years ago than they are now; and indeed we might go back even farther than that. Tipperary County might perhaps be named as the head-quarters of the confederation; and the King's County and Queen's County, Meath and Westmeath, Louth, and even Monaghan, where, as 'the gap of the north,' it adjoined the midland counties, were from time to time the scene of its unhallowed operations.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Ribbon Code was terrible to the landlords only. The tenant, quite as frequently as the landlord, became the victim; and many and many a thriving, harmless, well-conditioned man has perished under its terrible laws.

The main object of the Ribbon Society was to prevent any landlord, under any circumstances whatever, from depriving a tenant of his land. 'Fixity of tenure,' which has lately been so boldly demanded by the advocates of tenant-right, was then only secretly proclaimed in the lodges of the Ribbon Society; and 'fixity of tenure' it was determined to carry out to the death, which almost necessarily followed.

The second object was to deter, on pain of almost

certain death, any tenant from taking land from which any other tenant had been evicted. These main principles of the society were carried out with relentless severity; and numerous indeed were the victims in all ranks of life, from the wealthy peer to the humblest cottier, who fell under the hand of the assassin, sworn to carry out its decrees.

But it may well be supposed that a society, thus constituted in utter lawlessness, was not very likely to adhere long or accurately to the precise objects for which it had originally been formed; and, accordingly, by degrees it assumed the position of the redressor of *all* fancied wrongs connected with the management of land, or with landed property in any form whatever. I have known frequent instances of landlords receiving threatening notices for evicting tenants, although these tenants had refused to pay any rent whatever, and of tenants receiving similar notices for taking the land of the evicted occupiers. I have also seen a notice, announcing certain death to a respectable farmer, because he dismissed a careless ploughman; and a friend who lived near me, was threatened with death, because he refused to hire a shepherd who had been recommended to him and who was approved of by the local Ribbon lodge. I myself received a letter, illustrated with a coffin in flaring bloody red, and adorned with death's head and cross bones, threatening the most frightful consequences to myself and family, if I did not continue to employ a young profligate carpenter, whom I had discharged for idleness and vice!

It was during a period when the system was in full force and vigour—about the year 1840—that I was living at Sopwell Hall, an old family residence, which I rented from my cousin, Lord Ashtown. The small town of Cloghjordan was about three miles distant from The Hall, and I usually attended church there. The Rev. F. F. Trench was at that

time curate of the parish. The country was very much disturbed, by which I mean that wild deeds had been enacted by the Ribbonmen, within a short distance of our residence. A most respectable tradesman, habitually in my employment, had been barbarously murdered in the open day, on his way between Shinrone and Cloghjordan, and a well-to-do farmer, living within half a mile of our house, had also been murdered for no cause that we could possibly ascertain, unless that he had taken two acres of land, which had recently been thrown on the landlord's hands by an insolvent tenant.

We were at church one Sunday, about this time, at Cloghjordan, and whilst the Rev. F. F. Trench was preaching, a messenger came to the pew of Mr. Hall, a gentleman of considerable fortune in the neighbourhood, a kind and amiable and much respected man, and whispered a few words to his son, who immediately left the church. A few minutes after, another messenger came and whispered to his son-in-law. He also instantly left the church. The congregation became somewhat nervous at witnessing this strange pantomime; and I was on the point of leaving to ascertain what had happened, when the preacher observing the attention of the congregation to be diverted from him, brought the sermon to an abrupt conclusion.

On going out, I heard that Mr. Hall's house, situated about three miles from Cloughjordan, had been attacked during church-time by four armed men; that they had carried away 200*l.* in cash, with all his arms, and behaved rudely to the young ladies of the house, his daughters, who had remained at home that day. Mr. Hall, if I recollect aright, was himself absent.

Immediately on leaving the church, I mounted my horse and galloped off to Mr. Hall's residence. I there found that matters were not so bad as had been stated. Four or five armed men had entered the house and demanded arms

and money from the young ladies. They told them the money, about 200*l.*, was in their father's iron chest. The chest was an immensely strong and heavy one. The robbers carried it outside the house, and did their utmost to force it open with crowbars, but it was too strong for them to break, and too heavy to carry away; and I saw the chest afterwards, lying on the lawn outside the house, all battered and dinged, but the 200*l.* was safe and untouched inside. They then returned to the mansion, and took a few stand of arms; and the leader went into the parlour, where the young ladies were, and asked for some wine. One of the young ladies having heard the footsteps of the men, and fearing they might become excited with drink, with much presence of mind privately emptied out of the window the contents of a large square flask of whisky which was on the side table, so that when they came, there was nothing but water to be found to drink. They treated the young ladies courteously, and decamped.

The point now was to find out whither they had gone. It was broad daylight, the country was tolerably open, and yet no traces of the robbers could be found. I galloped along all the roads leading in the most likely directions, but could obtain no tidings whatever of them. Mr. Charles Trench, Lord Ashtown's brother, then staying at Sopwell Hall—which lay on the opposite side of a large bog, from Mr. Hall's—beat, as he thought, every part of a thick holly wood immediately adjoining the bog, in which it appeared not unlikely they might have hidden themselves, but could see nothing of them, and evening closed in without our coming on their track. At night the police searched some houses of suspicious character, and in one of them several men with blackened faces and stained with bog-mould were found concealed. They were arrested and brought before a magistrate, and four of them were

ultimately prosecuted to conviction by the young ladies, and were transported beyond the seas. We discovered afterwards that two of the men with loaded fire-arms were actually lying under a holly bush, in the small thick wood called 'the Paddock' where Mr. Charles Trench had searched for them. Had he come upon them at such a time and so prepared, bloodshed would probably have ensued. Several stand of fire-arms and some swords were afterwards found in the Paddock, where the men had lain concealed.

Thenceforth, without any reasonable cause that I could ascertain, Mr. Hall became exceedingly unpopular and obnoxious to the peasantry.

A few months after this occurrence, on the 18th of May, a beautiful bright sunny day at noon, I was riding with a friend to the sessions at Borrisokane. I heard a faint report at a little distance in the fields as of a gun or pistol, but took no notice of it, when almost immediately afterwards a man came running up a lane to meet us, saying,

'Oh! Sir, Mr. Hall has just been shot.'

'Shot!' cried I, pulling up my horse, 'do you mean murdered?'

'Oh! yes, Sir,' replied the man, 'he is lying there in the field.'

'Is he dead?' I asked.

'Stone dead!' was the man's reply; and as he said so, I never shall forget the strange mixture of horror and of triumph which pervaded his countenance.

We rode on rapidly down the lane, and just where it emerged upon a little grass lawn, was the body of Mr. Hall. He was a man apparently about fifty years of age, and his bald head lay uncovered on the ground. He was quite warm but 'stone dead,' lying in the open field. Numbers of people were working all around, planting their potatoes; but not a trace of the murderer could be found.

It was a sessions day at Borrisokane, and several other

gentlemen who were also going there joined us almost immediately afterwards. There were a few country-people standing by. I shall not easily forget my feelings on this occasion. There lay the body of a murdered gentleman, with whom I had been on terms of friendly intercourse—shot on his own estate, and in his own field, in the noonday, whilst on the faces of the peasantry could be plainly seen an expression of triumphant satisfaction ; and there we stood, several mounted horsemen—many of us armed, burning to avenge his death and to arrest the murderer, and yet we looked like so many fools not knowing what to do, though it was scarcely more than ten minutes since the fatal shot had been fired.

I turned to a gentleman of well-known courage, and a daring rider, and said,

'Can we do nothing, Mr. Smith? The murderer cannot have gone far; surely we might make a circuit round the place across the country, and though no one will tell us which way he ran, we may by this means come up with him or see him. We are both well mounted and armed—let us try.'

'Hush, my dear Sir,' replied he, 'the murderer never ran ; that would at once betray him. He is surely in the field with us at this moment, and is probably one of those now looking at the body and expressing his wonder at who did it.'

I saw the possible truth of his observation, and was compelled to repress my feelings and remain an inactive spectator. The police and stipendiary magistrate came up soon afterwards; and the body having been brought into a neighbouring house to await the inquest, we rode from the scene very sorrowful. On arriving at home I told a man in my employment what I had just witnessed. He showed neither surprise nor excitement, and his manner left a full conviction on my mind that he had been aware beforehand that such a deed was to be done.

Large rewards were now offered for the discovery of the murderer, and a sum amounting to fifteen hundred pounds was raised; but for some time no one would come forward to give intelligence and claim the reward. At last it was announced by the magistrates, that an accomplice had turned informer—that the murderer was arrested and would be tried at the ensuing assizes at Nenagh.

I was on the grand jury at those assizes, and attended closely to the trial throughout. Mr. Blackburn, late Chief Justice of Appeals and then Attorney-General, came down from Dublin specially to prosecute. It was a most interesting trial. The informer was a dark, intelligent, powerful, and desperate-looking man of about forty years of age. The prisoner was pale, slight, and thin, apparently about twenty-five years of age, and without anything in his countenance to indicate ferocity or passion.

The story told by the informer was a strange one. He said that a farmer on Mr. Hall's estate had hired him for five pounds to do the deed, and that the young man was to have three pounds for accompanying him; that the only cause for the murder was that Mr. Hall had prevented the farmer from burning some land for conacre, and 'that it would be a good thing to rid the country of such a tyrant;' that Mr. Hall was expected that day on the estate, and that he (the witness) and his companion agreed to go there also and see how the job could best be done. That he saw Mr. Hall walking in the field with a sword-cane in his hand—that he stole up quietly on the grass behind him with the pistol up his sleeve, and that when he was quite close, Mr. Hall heard him and turned round and asked him what he wanted; he feigned some excuse, saying 'he came to ask his honour leave to sow conacre,' which Mr. Hall refusing, he passed on. Again he stole up behind his victim near a hedge, and again Mr. Hall turned round still unsus-

picious of his design, but surprised at the occurrence. The intending murderer, thus twice baffled in his design, went aside to his companion, and dashing down the pistol on the ground beside him, said with an oath, 'I see it is unlucky, I will have nothing to do with it.' The young man coolly took up the pistol: 'You are an infernal coward,' said he, 'watch me if I don't do it.'

Mr. Hall was still walking in the fields, enjoying the freshness of this sunny day in May. The young man came up unperceived within twenty yards of him. Mr. Hall heard him, and turned round and faced him. The murderer walked on still without speaking or showing his pistol, straight up to Mr. Hall. Mr. Hall was amazed; but seeing him still coming steadily and silently on, he half drew his sword-cane, at last suspecting that mischief must be intended. The man still continuing to approach, Mr. Hall sprang back a step or two in order to get his sword-cane free, and in doing so, stumbled over a tussock and fell. The young man then went steadily up to him, and before Mr. Hall could get up or recover himself, he put the pistol down close to his head and shot him dead upon the spot. The moment he had done so he threw the pistol into the adjoining hedge, walked quietly to meet his companion, put his hands into his pockets, never left the ground, and was one of those whom we afterwards saw standing near the body.

Such was the story as told by the man who had been originally hired to murder Mr. Hall, but who had now turned informer; and his testimony was corroborated by a chain of evidence, so clear and conclusive, that not a doubt of its truth was left upon the mind of a single grand juror who heard him.

The trial was rather a peculiar one; and, contrary to general expectation, the judge's charge was decidedly in favour of the prisoner. The jury were evidently puzzled,

but they threw the benefit of the doubts entertained by the majority in favour of the prisoner at the bar—as they were justly bound to do, and it was afterwards openly announced, that eleven were for an acquittal, and only one for a conviction. Nothing could turn this man from his unwavering belief that the prisoner had done the deed ; and after the usual time the jury was discharged, and the prisoner remanded to gaol.

The result of this trial, which excited the deepest interest on all sides, both amongst the gentry and the peasantry, was looked upon as a decided triumph by the latter. They naturally thought that if, after such evidence as that given on the occasion of the trial, the prisoner had all but escaped, no jury could now be found to convict him, and they threatened and persecuted the unfortunate juror who had alone held out for a verdict. In consequence of this failure on the part of the Crown, the state of the country became rapidly worse, and three more murders were committed. One of them was brought particularly under my notice. I was on my way one Sunday with my family to the church at Cloughjordan. My two sons, then little boys, were riding on ponies by my side, and were slowly ascending a steep hill beside the carriage on the borders of Knocknacree Wood. One of the boys suddenly called my attention to a crowd in a field, not very far from the place where we were. I looked, and seeing a number of people bending over one object in a ditch, and making gesticulations of grief, I immediately rode into the field to ascertain the cause. The people made way for me as I came up ; and the sight which then presented itself was very horrible. A man comfortably dressed as a peasant, lay flat on his back in the gripe ; nearly one half of the hinder part of the head was severed from the other half, apparently by the blow of some heavy

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The hands were shut close and tight, and were exactly in the attitude of a man sparring desperately with his adversary

instrument—as his brains were dashed out, and sprinkled on the stones around. Close beside him lay the weapon with which he had evidently been killed—it was a hatchet, with blood and hair still adhering to it. The position of the body was peculiar, and had an awful effect upon the spectators. When first he was struck down, he had fallen on his side, and had lain with his arms projecting from his body, and his hands clenched in the agony of death; but when I saw him, the people had turned the body on its back, in order more clearly to identify the face. The arms had stiffened and grown cold, and remained in their first position, stuck out in front, projecting from the body; the hands were shut close and tight, and were exactly in the attitude of a man sparring desperately with his adversary, and defending himself even in death. The sight was very dreadful. A neighbour soon after brought a linen cloth, and threw it over the body. I rejoined my family on their way to church and told them what I had seen. Soon after I gave information to the police resident in Cloughjordan, who went out and scoured the country, but without success. He was a tenant who had dared to take some vacant land.

Such scenes as these could not fail to produce a strong effect upon the gentry resident around, and urgent letters were written by myself and other gentlemen to the Government; and at last a 'Special Commission' was ordered at Clonmel for the trial of several Ribbon cases, and of Mr. Hall's murderer in particular, of the guilt of whom the authorities had not a doubt.

The Special Commission was looked upon, and justly so, as a very formidable affair. The judges chosen by the Government to preside, were Judges Doherty and Pennefather. They sat together, as is usual in a special commission. Almost all the gentlemen in the county attended

and were prepared to serve as jurors; and Clonmel, where the Commission was held, was crowded to excess. The opening of the Commission had a very solemn effect. The first trial was that of Mr. Hall's murderer. The prisoner was again brought to the bar and arraigned. He was paler than when tried before at Nenagh, but he still preserved the same impassive resolution. The grand jury was duly sworn, the bills were found, and then came the swearing-in of the petty jury who were to try the case, and on whom the cause of justice and the life of the prisoner depended. The prisoner was allowed twenty challenges peremptorily, and as many more as he could show cause for. It was an exciting scene, and great quickness and knowledge of character were required on the part of the prisoner's counsel and attorney. Of course their object, so far as their right of challenge would allow them, was to challenge and reject all the firm, fair, and upright men in the county, and to place upon the jury the timid, or those whose sympathies, from political, religious, or other reasons, might be supposed to lean towards the prisoner.

But they had not much time to decide. As the name of each juror resounded through the court, and the person called answered to his name, the crier handed the small testament to the man now about to be sworn, and said aloud, slowly and solemnly, 'Prisoner, look upon the juror—juror, look upon the prisoner;' and then he commenced the oath. At this moment, and with no more time to consult or determine than I have stated, the prisoner's attorney cried out in a loud voice '*Challenge!!*' if he thought the juror likely to be unfavourable to his cause. The effect was very striking. And as gentleman after gentleman, and magistrate after magistrate were 'challenged,' it became a decided compliment to be rejected.

At length my name was called; I answered, came forward to the front, and took the testament in my hand. I felt that all eyes were upon me. It was well known that the murder had been committed near my residence, and that I had been almost present at the scene. 'Prisoner, look upon the juror—juror, look upon the prisoner.' We both looked steadily at each other, and just as I thought the oath was about to be administered, '*Challenge !!*' resounded through the court. I cannot describe my emotion as I felt relieved from the onus of such a trial.

At length a jury—and by no means a bad one—was sworn. So many good jurors had attended that the prisoner had indeed no great choice; his challenges were soon exhausted, and a jury admitted in general to be a fair one, proceeded now to listen to the intensely interesting statement of the Attorney-General, who began to open his case. The trial proceeded with all the grave solemnity which was suited to such an occasion. The witnesses gave their evidence clearly, consistently, and well, nor did the cross-examination of the prisoner's counsel, though conducted in the ablest manner, shake their testimony in the least. All who heard the evidence plainly saw that a conviction must ensue.

The disclosures which the informer had necessarily made when examined on the previous trial, gave the prisoner's counsel a great advantage over him. He now knew the whole of the informer's story, and made the most of his knowledge in his cross-examination; but still he failed to shake the frightful truthfulness of his evidence. One scene struck me much. After the witness had detailed how he had himself undertaken to be the murderer, and had twice stolen behind Mr. Hall for the purpose of shooting him in the back, and had only given up his design because he fancied it was 'unlucky,' the prisoner's counsel said,

'Then it was not your conscience which smote you?'

'*Not a bit!*' replied the man.

'And you stole up behind the poor old gentleman to shoot him for money?' said the lawyer.

'*I did.*'

'I suppose you would do anything for money?'

'*I would,*' replied the man, quite unappalled and growing desperate.

The lawyer still continued to excite him:—

'You would shoot your *father* for money, I suppose?'

'*I would,*' exclaimed the man furiously.

'*Or your mother?*'

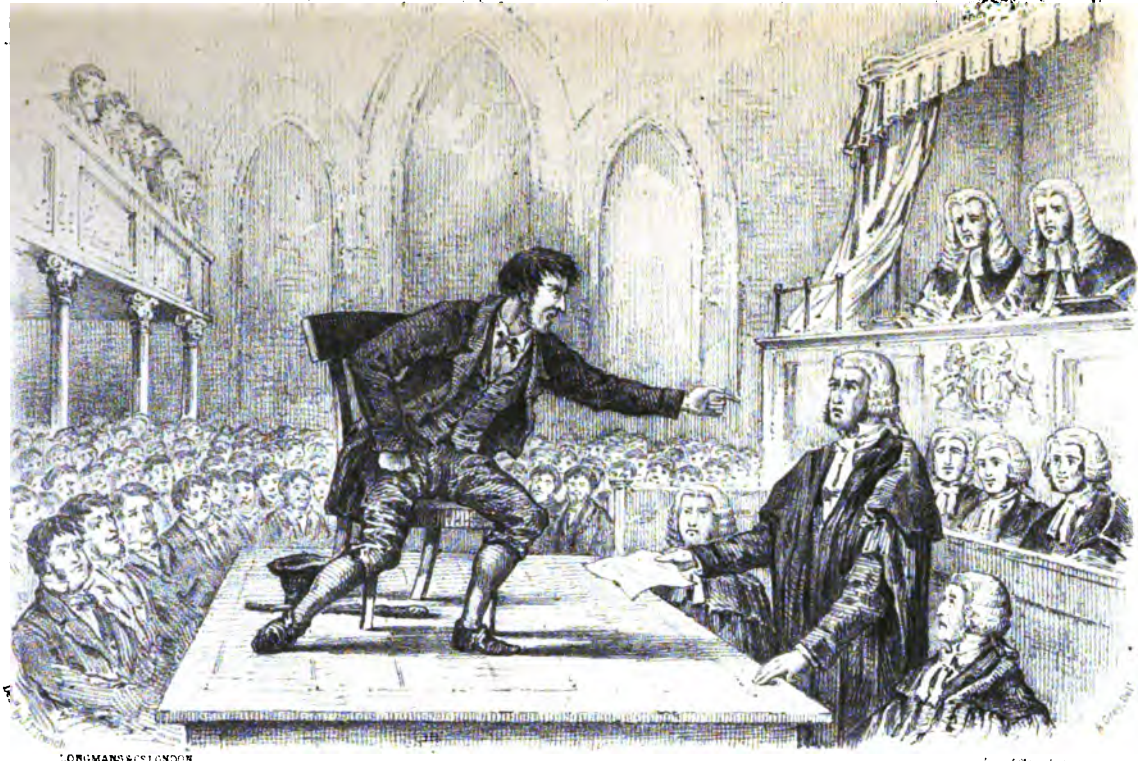
'*I would.*'

'*Or your sister?*'

'*I would.*'

'*Or your brother?*' continued the counsel.

'*Ay, or yourself either!*' cried the infuriated ruffian, almost leaping from his chair, and turning round so suddenly within a few feet of his cross-examiner's head, that his usually undaunted nerve seemed almost appalled by the ferocity of the savage. A thrill of horror ran through the court, whilst some however could not help smiling, and some laughing outright at the unexpected start given to the able cross-examiner. The effect upon the jury however seemed to me to be the reverse of what the counsel had intended. His object had been to impeach the witness's veracity by making him admit his own depravity, never for one moment believing that he would have acknowledged to such frightful recklessness in crime; but the admissions he made of his willingness to commit any barbarity, and the ferocity with which he turned upon his cross-examiner, left not a doubt upon the mind of anyone who had witnessed the scene, of the truthfulness of his testimony.



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"Aye or yourself either" cried the infuriated ruffian almost leaping from his [illegible]

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The Prisoner did not utter a word. He looked his Judge steadily in the face.

The jury soon after retired: no one left the court; and during their absence no new trial was commenced. A painful suspense pervaded the whole assembly, and whispers only were heard. The prisoner had been allowed to sit down; but he soon rose again, and stood undaunted in the dock with the eyes of all upon him. At length the door of the jury room opened—the jurors slowly took their seats—the prisoner gave one rapid glance at the impenetrable countenance of the foreman, and being unable to read his fate immediately withdrew his eyes. The names of the jurors were called over, and the foreman was asked whether they had agreed upon their verdict. '*Guilty!*' was his grave reply, as he handed in his written paper. A suppressed murmur ran through the court. I could not say that it was either approbation or the reverse; it seemed to be the letting loose of pent-up feelings. The two judges simultaneously assumed the black cap, and Judge Doherty pronounced the sentence of the law in the awful terms—so dreadful to hear when pronounced against a living being—telling him to his face as he stands in health and strength before you, that he must be taken from the place where he now stands to the prison from whence he came, and from thence to the common place of execution, and be there hanged by the neck till he is dead, and that his body must be buried within the precincts of the gaol—and—'May the Lord have mercy on your soul.'

The prisoner did not utter a word, but during the momentary and oppressive silence which prevailed after the last solemn words were spoken, an agonised and piercing shriek rang through the hall—and a young woman was carried out fainting. A terrible sensation thrilled through the whole court—I saw the young man's frame quiver convulsively as if a sharp knife had entered into his flesh, but he did not otherwise move. He looked his judge steadily in the

face—gave one glance around the court—saw his last hope was gone—and then with a compressed lip, but quietly and unmoved as before, he stepped down from the bar, and I never saw him again. He was executed in a fortnight after his conviction.

Tipperary for a long time after was quiet.

CHAPTER V.

FARNEY. 1843.

ABOUT three years after the occurrences described in the preceding chapter, whilst still residing at Sopwell Hall, in the month of March 1843, I received a letter from a friend in England, stating that Mr. Shirley's agent in the Co. Monaghan had died suddenly, and that he had recommended Mr. Shirley to offer the agency to me. He mentioned further that Mr. Shirley had consented to do so, on certain conditions specified, and that if I was desirous of obtaining a first-class agency, with a high salary attached, it would be advisable that I should proceed at once to London, and wait on Mr. Shirley in person.

I immediately resolved to accept of this proposal, and in a few hours I was on my way to London. After a satisfactory interview, during which all was arranged and the terms mutually agreed on, it was settled that I should return to Ireland in company with my new employer.

We arrived in due course at Carrickmacross on March 30 1843, and we immediately put up at Shirley House, the agent's residence, situated close to the town. But I was somewhat startled on hearing during the first evening of our arrival, that no sooner had the tenants ascertained that Mr. Mitchell, the late agent, had suddenly expired in the Court House of Monaghan, than that very night, they lighted fires on almost every hill on the estate; and over a district of upwards of twenty thousand acres, there was

scarcely a mile without a bonfire blazing in manifestation of joy at his decease. So remarkable an occurrence as this could not pass unobserved by one who was now about to succeed him.

The next day, being Friday, Mr. Shirley and I went early into the office, where we had a long conversation with the chief clerk, a most intelligent man. I found from him that the tenants on the estate were much excited, that they considered themselves (whether rightly or wrongly he did not say) ground down to the last point by the late agent; that they had for some time previously meditated an open rebellion against him, but now that he was dead, they determined to rise and demand a reduction of rent and the removal of the many grievances with which they stated that they were oppressed.

After two or three hours of anxious consultation, without anything very definite having been arrived at, we left the office; and on emerging into the open space before the door we found ourselves surrounded by a large body of men, who had quietly gathered outside whilst we were talking within; and the moment we appeared they demanded in loud and threatening tones, a reduction of their rents, and the removal of all their grievances.

Mr. Shirley was taken much by surprise at this unexpected aspect of affairs:—

'What do you want?' said he, when some little silence was restored.

'We want a reduction of our rents,' said a man who seemed to be the spokesman. 'We are determined to pay the present rents no longer. We are pressed and ground down, and we must have a removal of our grievances.' Here shouting commenced, and sticks were whirled in the air.

The sub-inspector of police now appeared upon the

scene, and offered Mr. Shirley assistance from that body; but Mr. Shirley, under the impression that there was no danger, declined it.

As soon as silence was restored, Mr. Shirley replied,

'Well, I must say I am much surprised at your conduct, which is anything but what I expected from my tenants; but if you will come to me on Monday next, you shall have an answer to your demands.'

'Monday! Monday!' was shouted on all sides. The most frenzied excitement ensued. Hats were thrown in the air, sticks were flourished on all sides, and the men actually danced with wild delight. After a little time however the crowd cleared away, and the news flew like wildfire over the town and country, that the whole tenantry were told to come in on Monday next, that they might know the amount of the reduction to be granted, and have all their grievances removed!

Such was the story put about; and the tenantry resolved accordingly to get up an imposing demonstration. Emissaries were sent round on Sunday to urge every man on the estate to be in Carrickmacross next day. Those on the Bath Estate adjoining were also invited to come in with a view to add to the demonstration.

No sooner had the crowd dispersed than Mr. Shirley saw the consequences of telling his tenantry to come in on Monday *without having limited them to a respectable deputation.* He therefore directed that a placard should be printed and posted up, of which the following is a copy:—

'Mr. Shirley begs to inform the tenantry of the Shirley property that having received an application from them requesting a reduction of rent, in consequence of the past and present depressed state of prices of grain and cattle, and having given that application the fullest consideration in his power, he has to inform the tenantry that as it is his

opinion that the present distress has not been caused, so far as the Shirley tenantry are concerned, by high rents; and that therefore, although both willing and anxious to relieve the really distressed, yet he does not feel bound to make at present, either a temporary or a permanent reduction in the rent of the Shirley Estate, as it is generally admitted that considering the rents charged on other properties, the rental of the Shirley property is not unreasonable.

'Under these circumstances Mr. Shirley must decline meeting the tenantry on Monday next as proposed, and he trusts the tenantry will on that day remain at home and attend to their ordinary business.

'CARRICKMACROSS, *April* 1, 1843.'

This placard, posted up on Saturday, was torn down by the people on Sunday. It exasperated them more than before and they now foresaw and prepared for a fierce struggle. Nothing could exceed the excitement which prevailed throughout the entire day, especially at all the chapels, and it was resolved that about ten thousand men, selected from both estates, which comprised almost the whole barony of Farney, should march on Monday into Carrickmacross to receive Mr. Shirley's statement, and act as circumstances required.

Up to this period I had scarcely spoken a word, and had ventured no advice whatever. The whole thing was so sudden and unexpected by me, who had just arrived an entire stranger in the country, that I resolved to remain passive and see the issue of this strange adventure.

I may here mention that the people of the barony of Farney are a very peculiar race. The whole barony was formerly granted by Queen Elizabeth to Walter, Earl of Essex, in the year 1576.* It was then a wild and

* See 'Some Account of the Territory or Dominion of Farney,' by E. P. Shirley, Esq.

almost unenclosed alder plain and consisted chiefly of coarse pasturage, interspersed with low alder scrub. The inhabitants at that time were few, and industrial pursuits were almost wholly unattended to. War and plunder were the chief occupations of the male portion of the population, and under the leadership of their chieftains the Macmahons, (Farney was then called 'the Macmahons' country,') they carried on an almost continuous strife with the neighbouring clans of the Co. Monaghan, sometimes fighting amongst themselves, and sometimes joining against the common enemy—the English, who had then a difficult task to subdue the native inhabitants, and to locate themselves in Ireland.

Even up to the year 1606 the country of the Macmahons was only partially subdued, so that when the Lord Deputy, the Lord Chancellor, and the Chief Justice of Ireland found it necessary to pass through this wild district on their journey to the north of Ireland, to hold a commission of assize, they were accompanied by 'a guard of six or seven score of foot, and fifty or threescore horse, which,' adds Sir John Davis who writes the account, 'is an argument of a good time and a confident deputy, for in former times (when the state enjoyed the best peace and security) no Lord Deputy did ever venture himself into those parts without an army of eight hundred or one thousand men.'*

At this time, 1606, the estate of the Earl of Essex appears to have been but of trifling value to its noble owner, inasmuch as a lease of the whole barony, with all its profits, &c. was granted to Ever Macmahon for a yearly rent of 250*l. payable in Dublin*,† the latter clause being

* See 'Some Account of the Territory or Dominion of Farney,' by E. P. Shirley, Esq.

† *Ibid.*

apparently an important provision and one not very easily accomplished.

In the peaceful times which followed the accession of James I. the lands began to rise considerably in value, and in the year 1618, the territory of Farney appears to have been let to Brian Macmahon for one year at the greatly increased rent of 1500*l.**

In the year 1636, it appears by a 'Rent Role' now in my possession, and signed by Thomas Cromwell, that 'the Earl of Essex' land in Ferney and Clancaruile for ½ ye: 1633' amounted in value to 1021*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.*, and the total number of tenants (a full list of whom is given together with the names of the lands they occupied) amounted to 38. Patrick McLoughlin and Richard Blaney, Esq. appear by this curious document to have been the highest rent payers on the estate, the one paying 60*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* and the other 40*l.* half-yearly. The total yearly rent then amounted to 2022*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*

At this time also, 1636, a complete survey appears to have been made, probably the first ever made of the barony, and a beautiful set of maps were laid down on vellum, executed in a masterly manner. This survey and set of maps complete, giving all the denominations of the several lands very nearly corresponding with the names at present in use, are now in existence, carefully bound up in a large volume, and are still in perfect preservation at Longleat, the seat of the Marquis of Bath in Wiltshire, the present owner of one moiety of the barony.

In 1646, Robert the third Earl of Essex died, and his estates devolved on his sisters Lady Frances and Lady Dorothy Devereux, the former of whom married Sir William Seymour afterwards Marquis of Hertford, and the

* See 'Some Account of the Territory or Dominion of Farney,' by E. P. Shirley, Esq.

latter married Sir Henry Shirley, Bart., the ancestor of the present proprietor of the other moiety of the barony.

The barony (the church lands excepted) continued for a considerable time in the joint possession of these two families who derived from the co-heiresses Lady Frances and Lady Dorothy Devereux, and at length in the year 1692, Thomas Thynne, Viscount Weymouth, ancestor of the present Marquis of Bath, being possessed of one moiety, and Robert Shirley, Lord Ferrers, being in possession of the other moiety, a final division was agreed on and made between the parties.

The division of the territory of Farney, effected in the year 1692 was made under the direction of Mr. John Mainwaring and Mr. Richard Drakeford,* and the value of the eastern moiety, or present Bath property, was set down by them as worth 1313*l.* 14*s.* 4½*d.* per annum, and the value of the western moiety, or present Shirley property, was set down as worth 1313*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.* per annum. The centre of the main street of Carrickmacross formed the boundary line between the two estates.

In the year 1729, the estates above-described appear to have been estimated at 2000*l.* per annum each, and in 1769 Lord Weymouth's, now the Bath Estate, was estimated at 3000*l.* per annum, and the Shirley Estate at 5000*l.* Total, 8000*l.* per annum.

During almost the entire of the 18th century the lands of Farney were held by 'middlemen,' as the intermediate tenant, between the landlord and the occupier of the soil, was called, and it was during this period that the native inhabitants, few or none of whom were ever displaced by the aristocratic owners of the soil, increased and multiplied to a vast extent; and that the waste and wild lands were

* See 'Some Account of the Territory or Dominion of Farney,' by E. P. Shirley, Esq.

fenced and enclosed, and ultimately brought into cultivation to meet the wants of this rapidly-increasing population ; so that in the year 1843, only 74 years after the estimated value of the year 1769, I found on my arrival at Carrickmacross, that the rent-roll of the two estates together amounted to upwards of 40,000*l.* per annum, whilst the inhabitants had increased in such an extraordinary manner that by the census of 1841 the population amounted to something upwards of 44,107 souls.

The brief outline which I have thus given of the history of this remarkable barony will assist in explaining the position in which I found matters at Carrickmacross on my first arrival in the month of March 1843. The Celt in all his purity had been allowed to increase and multiply, Irish was the language at that time chiefly spoken by the people. Schools for the education of the young were then few and far between. The national system of education was only in its infancy, and though the people were most docile and easily led, and generally obedient to their superiors, yet when once assembled in masses or roused by any common cause, their old natural temperament seemed suddenly to rise to the surface, and they became capable of the wildest and most frenzied excitement.

The population of Farney amounted, as I have stated, at that time to 44,107 souls. The extent of land was 41,567 acres Irish, or 67,333 acres statute measure. The valuation of the land, including Church lands, was about 46,395*l.* per annum. So that by the above it will appear that there was *more than one human being for every Irish acre of land in the barony*, and nearly one human being for every 1*l.* valuation per annum of the land. Such were the masses with whom we had now to deal.

Monday, April 3, was a warm and lovely day, and the sun shone out in all the brilliancy of Spring. The people

poured into the town by thousands, and it was generally considered that not less than ten thousand men, inclusive of strangers and the tenants of the Bath Estate, had assembled in Carrickmacross.

Shirley House, the agent's residence, is situated about two hundred yards outside the town of Carrickmacross. There is an open space before it, and exactly opposite, receding a little from the road, is the agent's rent-office. So that there is room for a very large crowd to assemble on the road and in the space between the office and the house. Looking out of the screened window, which commanded a view of the open space, it was rather formidable to see the vast and excited mass of people which had assembled to hear Mr. Shirley's ultimatum.

Mr. Evatt, agent to the estate of the Marquis of Bath, had also been called into council; and it was his decided advice not to yield to the demands of the people, that if one estate gave way the other must follow, and the barony would be completely disorganised; but that if the people were steadily met and their demands refused, they would, he thought, all go home quietly at once. From what I saw going on outside, I doubted much that matters could so easily be disposed of. I was, however, an utter stranger, supposed by all parties there to know nothing of the country or the people, and I therefore remained silent.

At length it became necessary that some one should address the tenantry, as they were becoming restless and very noisy, and accordingly Mr. Shirley requested me to go outside and tell them his determination: That he would not reduce their rents. That they might give up their land if they pleased, but that they had little or no cause of complaint.

I went out accordingly, having received these instructions,

and passing through the people and across the open space to the office, I endeavoured to address the crowd.

'A chair! a chair!' was shouted on all sides, 'put him on a chair that we may hear him.' So a chair was brought, and on it I stood facing this wild mob.

When raised on the chair I addressed the people. I told them that I was a perfect stranger; that at present I knew nothing of their case, that I believed Mr. Shirley was a most kind and indulgent landlord; and that after the fullest and most mature consideration he had come to the conclusion that no reduction of rent was necessary. I said that I hoped by better management, and more careful husbandry, they would yet find that they could pay their rents without any serious distress, and in short, I softened off as well as I could a most unpleasant task. I added further that as to the other grievances of which they complained, Mr. Shirley had not yet had a full statement laid before him concerning them, but if any such really existed he was willing and anxious to afford a remedy—that I should be happy to visit as many of the tenants as I could personally, and wherever I found a real grievance or injustice to exist, they might be assured I would have it removed.

There was a dead silence when I stopped speaking. It was broken by a stentorian voice.

'Then you won't reduce our rents?'

'I have already given you Mr. Shirley's answer upon that point,' said I. 'Stranger as I am, it is impossible for me to form any opinion as to whether they are too high or not.'

'*Down on your knees, boys!*' shouted the same voice; 'we will ask him once more upon our knees!' and to my horror and amazement the vast crowd, almost all at least who were in my immediate vicinity, dropped suddenly on their knees, and another dead silence ensued.

It was a dreadful spectacle. Their hats were on their

The message.

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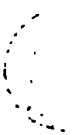
"Down on your knees boys!" shouted the same voice, "we will ask him once more up to our knees."



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"Bring him up, bring him up, and let us see him!" In a moment I was seized and dragged up the narrow road.

heads, and their sticks in their hands, some leaning upon them as they knelt, others balancing and grasping them. It was fearful to see the attitude of supplication, due only to a higher power, thus mingled with a wild defiance.

'*We ask you upon our knees, for God's sake to get us a reduction of our rents!*' again the same voice cried aloud.

I was greatly shocked. I instantly got down off the chair. I entreated them to rise. I told them that I was distressed beyond measure, but that I had given them the only message I was authorised to give; and quite overcome by such a scene, I endeavoured to move again across the crowded space from the office, in order to enter the house, and report proceedings to Mr. Shirley, intending to request that he would himself appear and address his excited tenantry.

The moment I moved towards the door, the vast crowd leaped again to their feet; I was instantly surrounded, hustled, and prevented from getting near it. I bore this good-humouredly, and the door being quite close to me, I had no doubt they would ultimately let me in. But whilst this scene was going on, a shout was raised by those who were at a distance up the road leading to the town, and who had not heard what had been said. 'Bring him up—bring him up, and let us see him!' In a moment I was seized, and though I resisted to my utmost, I was dragged up the narrow road which led from the house to the town. I was kicked and beaten, and pushed and bruised, my hat knocked off, and my clothes torn; and in this state I was dragged into the main street of Carrickmacross.

Here a scene of the wildest excitement took place, some cried one thing—some another. I was beaten again, my clothes torn off my back, and sticks whirled over my head. Four or five policemen met me as I was being dragged along, but they might as well have attempted to stop the

rushing of an Atlantic wave, as to stem the crowd that had assembled around me; and they only looked on and let me pass.

When in the main street, the people again wanted me to get upon a chair and speak, but I refused. I could not do so in the first place, and in the next I knew it would be useless—so I kept as quiet as I could, determined to reserve my strength till I should see the issue of this strange affair, but with little hope, at the time, that I should ever get out of their hands alive.

After a time, the people themselves being I believe as ignorant of what to do next as I was, a rumour—totally unfounded as it turned out—ran through the crowd that Mr. Shirley had fled from the agent's residence, and had gone out to his castle at Lough Fea, about a mile and a half from the town. A cry was at once raised by those around me, 'Bring him out, bring him out to the castle, and we will put him face to face with Mr. Shirley;' and immediately the whole body began to move towards the castle, dragging me along with them.

By this time, however, all those who were tolerably well disposed, and who had no wish at all events to be participators in a murder, began to move off from my immediate neighbourhood; and some who had at first spoken kindly to me, when they saw the ill-treatment I received, fearing now that matters were becoming serious, and that murder was likely to ensue, deserted me; and I was left in the hands of the vilest and most furious of the mob.

At length after walking some distance, I was so beaten and ill-treated, that I felt myself becoming faint, and well knowing that if once I fell, I should be trodden down without a chance of my life, I asked to stop for a few minutes to breathe. I shall never forget that moment. I was then about a mile from the town on the broad

and open road leading to Loughfea Castle. I turned and looked around me, thinking my last hour was come, and anxious to see if there was one kind face, one countenance, I had ever seen before, who at least could tell my friends how I had died. But I looked in vain. The hills were crowded with people. The long line of road was one mass of human beings, whilst those immediately around me, mad with excitement, seemed only to thirst for my blood.

Having got a few moments' breathing-time, and seeing all appeal to be vain, I turned again on my way, determined, however, to hold out to the last, as I felt that to fall or to faint must be certain death. Just then I became conscious of an able hand and a stout heart beside me, and I heard a whisper in my ear: 'They are determined to have your blood, but hold up, they shall have mine first.' The speaker grasped my arm firmly under his own, and walked on steadily by my side.

By this time I was completely naked with the exception of my trowsers. My coat, even my shirt, had been torn off, and I walked on, still beaten and ill-treated, like a man to execution; my head bare, and without any clothes from my waist upwards. To increase the misery of my situation, I found that my friend had been beaten and dragged away in spite of himself, and again I was left alone in the hands of those merciless men. I felt also I could now go no farther, and that a last effort must be made before my senses left me from exhaustion. Stopping therefore once more, I asked to be led towards a high bank at the roadside, and leaning against this I turned and faced those whom I now believed would soon become my murderers.

'I can go no farther,' said I; 'what have you brought me here for? What do you want me to do?' Again the same voice which I had first heard at the office, though I

could not identify the person from the shouting and confusion around me, cried aloud, 'We want a reduction of our rents, will you promise to get us that?'

There are times of instant danger, when it is said that the whole of a man's past life rushes before him in the space of a single moment. If ever there be such a time, this was such to me. I stood there, exhausted, without one friendly face on which to rest, and surrounded by the worst of ten thousand men who seemed determined to have a victim. I knew and felt all this. So I said very quietly, as a last effort to save my life, and hoping they would name something I could promise to ask for,

'And what reduction will you be content with?'

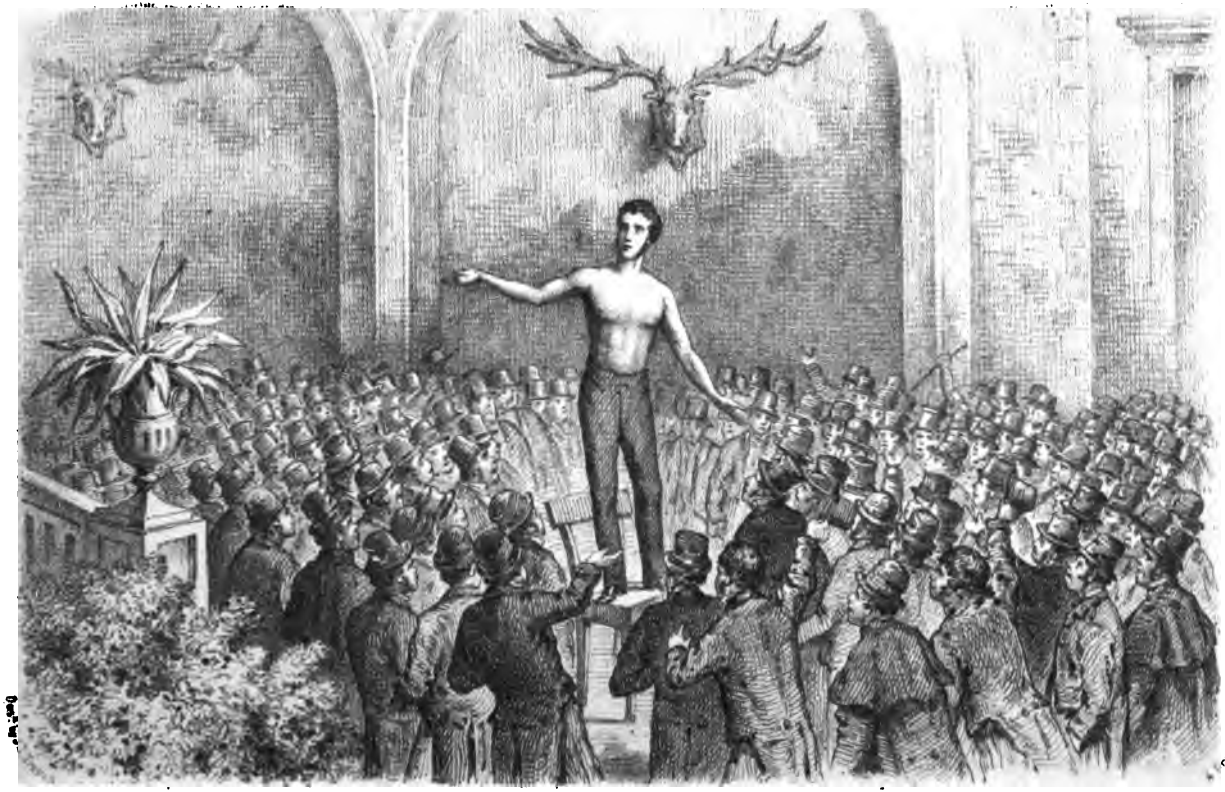
Again the same voice replied,

'We will never pay more than one-half our present rents.'

'Then,' said I, 'there ends the matter. *I never will promise that.*'

There was a pause, and a dead silence. I stood naked and bareheaded before them. They stood opposite to me, with their sticks clenched in their hands, ready to strike. I looked at them, and they at me. They hesitated; *no one would strike me first.* I saw that they wavered, and instinctively, in a moment I *felt* that I had won. This sudden revulsion of feeling—though I was still externally motionless—sent the blood throbbing to my temples with a rush that became almost oppressive. But the strange pause continued—when at length a shout was raised from the old stentorian voice again, 'Stand off, boys—for your lives! no one shall harm him—he is a good man after all!' and in a moment I was surrounded by a new set of faces, who dashed furiously towards me. They raised me on their shoulders, swept my old enemies away from me, procured me some water to drink, and carried me, now

The speech.



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"I told the people I had never injured them."

completely overcome, exhausted, and almost fainting, into the demesne of Loughfea.

Here again these suddenly converted friends desired me to get up on a chair, and speak to the crowd now assembled before the castle. I did so. A reaction for the moment had taken place within me, and I felt some return of strength.

I told the people I had never injured them. That it was a shame, and a disgrace of which I had not believed any Irishman to be capable, to treat a stranger as they had dealt with me that day. That in my own county I could have as many to fight for me as were now against me, and in short I abused them right heartily and soundly. They bore it without a murmur. My new friends cheered me vociferously, and I was carried, now quite unable to walk, into the Castle of Loughfea. The excitement was past. Mr. Shirley had not been there, and the people quietly dispersed.

In the evening I was conveyed in a covered carriage to Carrickmacross, blackened with bruises, stiff and sore, and scarcely able to stand—musing over the strange transactions which had happened that day—and wrapped in a countryman's frieze coat which had been borrowed to cover my nakedness.

CHAPTER VI.

BATTLE OF MAGHERACLOON.

IT may readily be supposed that the causes of an outbreak so serious as that which has been described in the preceding chapter, became a subject of very grave reflection with me.

I felt confident that the Ribbon Confederacy, with the operations of which I had become conversant through my intercourse with the peasantry of Tipperary, had nothing whatever to do with the outrage which had recently been committed. It appeared to be a sudden rising of the people by no means previously planned or premeditated. I had been much struck whilst in the hands of the mob, by the expressions which had occasionally escaped them, and which at the time I did not in the least understand, but which showed that other influences than Ribbonism operated strongly on their minds.

'By this and by that,' cried one, 'but we'll stand *the grippers no longer!*'

'Down with the coppers!'* cried another; 'we won't stand their being riz a farthing!'

'We'll hang the keepers, every mother's son of them,'

* Where there had been odd pence in the tenants' yearly rent, the previous agent had raised the amount to what he called 'the even shilling.' Thus, if a tenant's yearly rent had amounted to, say, 6*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.*, he raised it to 6*l.* 11*s.* The alteration was always on the side of increase. This they called 'the raising of the coppers.'

cried a third; and thus they continued in the midst of the ill-treatment they inflicted upon me, making use of terms, and alluding to circumstances, with which I was wholly unacquainted, though the entire mob seemed to be conversant with them. These expressions, and many others of a similar nature, accompanied as they were by the most furious declarations that 'they would stand them no longer,' left a deep impression upon my mind, and convinced me that the tenants, whether rightly or wrongly, had a firm conviction that they had not been fairly treated under the management of the late agent.

I therefore began, steadily, but unobserved by the tenantry, to ascertain whether they really had, or had not, any just grounds of complaint. Whilst thus engaged, I found to my surprise, that I had suddenly grown into considerable favour amongst them. They knew they had ill-treated me; that I was an entire stranger in the district, and could not possibly have done them any injury, nor influence the decisions which had been arrived at; and finding from my manner and intercourse with them, that I retained no ill-will for the past, and made no attempt, as they described it, 'to revenge myself upon them,' but that I spoke kindly to them as if no feelings of anger remained —which was indeed true—they seemed at once to place the utmost confidence in me; and thus I found myself unexpectedly possessed of a strange power over this wild and excitable people.

Under these circumstances I felt convinced that matters should not then be urged to any further extremities against them; believing that if a little time were allowed, they would see they had made a mistake in the step they had recently taken, and would soon concur quietly in whatever might be really just. But my advice, urged strongly to that effect, was unheeded by the authorities.

Perceiving that my motives were liable to misconstruction, I resolved therefore to let matters proceed without any further comment, being clearly of opinion, however, unless I had learned my countrymen in vain, that it would be no easy matter to bring things round to a satisfactory issue. Neither party now seemed inclined for any active hostilities. The tenants had been so far victorious in the late struggle, that they had not only 'carried off the new agent' captive, but had released him again of their own free-will, uncompelled by any legal force.

The contemplation of this feat seemed to afford them immense satisfaction; and though towards me personally they were most respectful, and even kindly in their manner, yet my capture was considered as a decided victory gained over the authorities at Carrickmacross. After much deliberation it was at length resolved by Mr. Shirley that the rents which were due should be at once demanded from all defaulting tenants, and if they refused to pay, that the most rigorous measures should be taken to force them into compliance. The bailiff was accordingly sent out to warn all backward tenants to come in and settle their accounts. The reply to this summons was uniform: 'They would pay no rent until their grievances were redressed.'

Every power conferred by the law was therefore brought to bear upon them; some were served with notices to quit; some with processes for rent; some with a legal document called a 'latitat;' and besides all these, 'driving' upon an extensive scale was adopted, as the quickest and most effective mode by which the rents could be hurried in.

Grippers, process-servers, keepers, and drivers, were now brought into full requisition. The 'grippers' were directed to arrest all tenants, against whom decrees for non-payment of rent had been obtained. The 'process-servers' were employed to serve the tenants with legal processes for rent,

whilst the 'keepers' were employed to watch the crops, lest they should be carried away in the night; and a numerous staff of 'drivers' were engaged to drive all the live stock in possession of the defaulting tenants, and to lodge them in the pound at Carrickmacross; from which they were not to be released until the rent was paid.

But the tenants kept a watchful eye upon all these preparations, which soon became known through every part of the country, and they took their own measures to frustrate them. To effect this object they established a system of what they called 'Molly Maguires.' These 'Molly Maguires' were generally stout active young men, dressed up in women's clothes, with faces blackened or otherwise disguised; sometimes they wore crape over their countenances, sometimes smeared themselves in the most fantastic manner with burnt cork about their eyes, mouths, and cheeks. In this state they used suddenly to surprise the unfortunate grippers, keepers, or process-servers, and either duck them in bog-holes, or beat them in the most unmerciful manner, so that the 'Molly Maguires' became the terror of all our officials. At last neither grippers, process-servers, nor keepers could be got for love or money to perform any duty or to face the danger of these dreaded foes.

Under these perplexing circumstances it was determined at head-quarters that I and the bailiffs should go out in a body and 'drive for rent,' taking a sufficient force of police along with us to ensure protection to ourselves and the drivers; and thus bring the recusant tenants to order. I may here mention that the term 'driving' was applied to a summary process for recovering rent, which the law in those days conferred upon the landlord, whereby he could drive to the pound the cattle of any tenant who owed any rent whatever, without previous notice to the tenant or any statement of the landlord's demand having been furnished to

him, and the cattle so impounded might be kept in durance until the rent was paid.

I shall not readily forget the appearance of our procession, as we started on this expedition. Mr. Barry the sub-inspector of police, an excellent officer, attended with a large force, which accompanied us as our escort. In front rode the bailiff of the estate. He was a short fat man, more suited to peace than war; and he did not hesitate to confide to me that he was at that moment 'shaking like a hare in her form.' I rode beside him partly in my official capacity as agent, and partly to comfort him by my presence. Behind us tramped our escort of police, and the rear was brought up by three or four magistrates who had been called into requisition for the occasion, and who seemed to consider it a most unpleasant duty, as it undoubtedly was.

No sooner had this formidable party appeared upon the roads in the open country, than the people rushed to the tops of the numerous hills with which the district abounds; and as we moved forward, they ran from one hill to another, shouting and cheering with wild defiant cries, and keeping a line parallel to that in which our party was travelling.

The object of our expedition was clearly understood by the people; and the exact position of our company was indicated to those in the lowlands by the movements of the parties on the hills; and accordingly as we advanced, every beast belonging to every tenant who owed rent was housed or locked up, or driven somewhere away. Thus as we had no legal right to break open any door, or take any cattle out of any house, but only to seize those we might find in the open fields and upon the lands of the defaulting tenants, we soon perceived (as we might have known before we started), that we were likely to return without success. The bailiff declared with a sigh, 'that not a hoof nor a horn was left in the whole country-side.'

At length when about to return home, without having secured any booty whatever, we came unexpectedly upon a poor little heifer calf, browsing quietly on the long grass beside a hedge. The bailiff having ascertained that she was grazing on the land of a tenant who was a defaulter, we seized upon the unhappy little beast, and drove it ingloriously home to the pound at Carrickmacross, a distance of about two miles, amidst the jeers and laughter of the populace, at the result of our formidable day's driving.

'Bedad, it's not every day your honour would be able to bring home such grand stock as that!' remarked one fellow as the bailiff and I rode to the pound with our prize in all the dignity we could muster.

'Ah, shure his honour comes from a good country, and should know good stock when he sees it,' said another.

'Sorra hap'orth else he'd be contint with,' said a third; 'and shure isn't he going to set up an agricultural show upon the estate, and that's the very baste will bear away the prize anyhow, as the greatest show of them all!'

Annoyed as I was at the result of our expedition, yet I felt it impossible to avoid laughing at their fun, and I took it all good-humouredly; not so the bailiff, he sighed and groaned at the thought of how low he must have fallen in the opinion of the tenants before they could have dared to use such language towards him whom they had always addressed with respect—which indeed he had always deserved—and he whispered to me in a confidential voice, that 'he was ready to sink into the airth with shame.' Fortunately for the credit of all parties concerned we never again attempted a 'driving' expedition.

The grippers and process-servers were now pressed again into more active requisition than ever. It was no easy matter for these men to perform their duties. A few chance captures of defaulting tenants were occasionally made, and

the victims were carried off to Monaghan Gaol; but the process-servers, from the nature of their duties, were unable to conceal their proceedings, and with them the 'Molly Maguires' carried on a remorseless war: sometimes misleading them by false information; sometimes terrifying them so that they were compelled to flee for their lives; and sometimes actually ducking them in bog-holes or beating them severely with sticks; so that they soon declared they were quite ready and willing to resign their posts, but until the 'Molly Maguires' were put down, they would be wholly unable to perform their duties or serve a single process.

A council of war was accordingly held to take this new position of affairs into consideration. It was agreed on all hands that the 'Molly Maguires must be put down.' But how to 'put them down' was not so easily solved. One magistrate proposed that we should lie in wait, and fire on them with light shot or 'sparrow-hail' in our guns when they appeared, and he was certain they would decamp at once. But when it was announced that the 'Molly Maguires' carried pistols under their petticoats, and in such case would certainly use them, this design was abandoned as untenable.

At length it was resolved to apply to the authorities in Dublin, for an order for 'substitution of service.' The process of 'substitution of service' was never adopted except where all ordinary means had previously been fairly tried to serve a party or parties with a legal notice, and had failed. In such cases the law allowed a legal document with the name or names of the parties on it, to be posted in certain public places in the parish, or barony, as the case might be; and this having been duly performed, the law considered that a proper service had been effected even though the party intended to be served might have

succeeded in evading or resisting an actual personal service.

An order for 'substitution of service' was then usually obtained from the Courts in Dublin, and upon sworn information to the effect stated above. In this case there could be no difficulty in obtaining the order, and it was necessary that the substitution process should be posted, amongst other places, on the walls of the Roman Catholic chapel of Magheracloon.

An expedition was accordingly arranged to carry this substitution of service into effect, and the bailiff, in real terror at the new enemy which had suddenly sprung up in the barony in the form of the 'Molly Maguires,' prepared most unwillingly to perform this unusual duty, and to post the substitution notice upon the walls of Magheracloon chapel.

The police who were called out in force to protect the bailiff in the accomplishment of this feat, were headed by the sub-inspector, and accompanied by a stipendiary magistrate. I was not present on this occasion, having gone a few days previously to the county of Tipperary, to arrange some business there. The bailiff, however, minutely described the whole scene to me. He rode in front, as he had done on the celebrated driving day, backed up and supported by the police; but as soon as he came near the chapel grounds, a wild shout of defiance was raised by the peasantry, who began to crowd into the chapel yard, and with uplifted sticks and threatening gestures swore that they would never allow the walls of the chapel to be desecrated by such a notice. The bailiff, a most respectable and temperate man, did his utmost to pacify the excited mob. He reasoned with them as best he could; and assured them that no desecration was intended—that he was only carrying out the law, which required that the

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"They aimed low directing their fire straight into the crowd of stone throwers."

notice should be posted on the chapel walls. But his voice had no more power than if he had spoken to a storm of wind; they leaped and danced madly about, whirling their sticks over their heads, and shouting that they would never allow him to touch the sacred edifice.

The stipendiary magistrate now ordered him to do his duty, and that he would be protected in doing it by the police, and he, trembling with fear, as well he might, at length approached with the notice in his hand to post it in due form. No sooner had he approached towards the chapel than a volley of stones sent him staggering back, though none actually struck him. The police were now ordered to advance. They did so amidst another shower of stones. The storm of missiles still continuing, and several of the police having been struck and injured, they were at length ordered to fire. They aimed low, and directing their fire straight into the crowd of stone-throwers they soon checked the vigour of the assault—six or seven men fell under the volley and rolled upon the ground. There was a short pause, a dead silence ensued—but it was only for a moment, and before the police could recover themselves and load again, a furious rush was made upon them by the enraged populace. Stones were sent flying as thick as hail; and finally the police, apprehending that they must be annihilated if they remained, ran to their cars, which were waiting at a little distance, and drove into Carrickmacross as fast as the horses could gallop, accompanied by the stipendiary magistrate!

The field thus quickly won, remained in the possession of the insurgents. One of the rioters was killed upon the spot—shot through the body. The others who fell were only slightly injured; one had his ear taken off, another was wounded in the finger, another shot in the arm, but

strange to say, none were seriously hurt, except the unfortunate man already mentioned.

Thus ended what the people to this day call 'The Battle of Magheracloon.'

Matters now began to assume a very serious aspect. It was necessary that an inquest should be held on the body of the man who had been killed; and much angry excitement prevailed. A great effort was made to obtain a verdict of manslaughter against the police. But the jury brought in a verdict of 'justifiable homicide,' or words to that effect.

It is scarcely possible to conceive the excitement which a case of this kind produces in the public mind in Ireland, where party feeling runs so high. The most terrible denunciations were indulged in. 'Blood for blood!' was the oft-repeated cry; and it was resolved to show sympathy with the friends of the deceased by an enormous attendance at his funeral. The funeral was accordingly immense; but a large body of police was in waiting—no outrage occurred—and after a few days, the excitement gradually subsided.

Shortly after this occurrence I once more earnestly pressed the importance, as well as the prudence, of ceasing to carry on a war in which no possible credit could be gained, and where every petty success on the part of the tenantry in baffling the designs of the landlord, was hailed as an important victory. At length my counsels prevailed. I was allowed to discharge all the grippers and process-servers from employment, to discontinue all operations against the tenants, and to wait quietly until the following October or November; that the harvest might come round and be gathered, when I felt sure that property would resume its rights, and the rents again be paid.

An incident occurred at this time which may prove

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"Maybe your Ladyship would come yourself into the Chapel yard, and see the place where the dead man lay."

interesting as showing that the ancient Celtic feeling or superstition about 'the trial by blood' was still to a certain extent in existence in that part of the country.

My wife happened in a few days after the 'Battle of Magheracloon,' while driving in her pony carriage, attended only by a single servant, to pass the chapel where the riot had taken place, and being a stranger in the country, and ignorant of the road, she stopped near the chapel yard to enquire the way to Carrickmacross.

A lady driving herself in a pony phaeton was not a very common occurrence in those unfrequented quarters, and as she conversed with the people who lived near the chapel, a crowd soon collected around her. Having mentioned that she was my wife, the recent battle became immediately the subject of conversation, and she, anxious to calm their feelings, entered into the whole case, and allowed them to tell her the story from beginning to end; and she expressed deep sympathy with them at the death of the unfortunate man who had been shot. They seemed gratified by her sympathy and general kindness of manner, and by her trusting herself alone in the midst of a crowd of rather wild-looking men at such a time, and at length one of the party said,

'Maybe your ladyship would just come yourself into the chapel yard, and see the place where the dead man lay; it would be kind in you to do so, as we are sure you feel tenderly for the poor man whose blood has been spilled by the police.'

She was naturally unwilling to leave her carriage and go into the chapel yard amongst the tomb-stones and graves, escorted by this wild-looking crowd of strangers, but they evidently wished for and pressed it so much that she felt unwilling to disappoint or refuse them, and having naturally a high courage in any difficulty or danger, she at once got

out of her carriage and walked with the people to see the spot where the dead man had lain. There was a little heap of straw lying where he had died and both the straw and the ground under it were saturated with his blood.

Her courage came to her aid, and she was able even in the midst of the somewhat excited crowd to look calmly down upon the sickening spectacle, and having again heard them recount all the circumstances of the battle, she quietly left the spot, looking steadily at the blood and straw as she left—a secret though undefined feeling coming over her, that she ought not to quail even at this painful sight, lest it should appear to the people that her husband had been guilty of having spilled the blood.

The peasants watched her closely and attentively—talked rapidly amongst themselves in Irish for a while—and then followed her silently from the chapel yard, with a softened, respectful, and altered manner. They assisted her into her carriage, crowding anxiously around to show her any little attention in their power, and just as she was about leaving, one of them said to her in an earnest voice,

'Well, Mrs. Trench, I am glad ye came to look at the blood; ye never could have looked at it as ye did, if you or yours had any hand in the killing of the poor boy that's gone. We all acquit ye of it now. The blood would have welled up in your face, if it had been ye that had done it!'

Mrs. Trench drove quietly away, the people all exclaiming, 'Safe home to your honour, safe home.' And never once did she receive an unkind or uncivil word from any of the people of Farney.

I now devoted myself constantly to visiting the tenants in person, listening to their complaints against each other, settling their disputes, often of the most ridiculous and trivial character, and making myself personally acquainted with them; letting them at the same time see the principles

upon which, when left to my own judgment, I wished in future to conduct the administration of the estate.

During this interesting period the strangest scenes sometimes presented themselves.

The grippers, it is true, had been dismissed from all office employment by me, but the tenants themselves continued to make full use of them; and if any tenant held a decree against his neighbour for debt, he employed the 'grippers' secretly to watch him as he went to the office and lie in wait for him as he came out, and then a struggle, a race, or a fight generally ensued between the gripper and his victim. Such scenes were both painful and ludicrous. I have seen the unhappy peasant looking anxiously round as he came out of my office, lest a gripper employed by some neighbour should be on the watch to catch him; and suddenly I have seen him start at full speed—the hitherto unseen gripper close in pursuit to arrest him. Away both would run, taking fence after fence in stroke, whilst numbers of people in the office rushed out to see the chase, apparently as much interested in it as if it were a steeple-chase across country. Exclamations of excitement and anxiety would constantly escape the spectators: 'Bedad he has him!' 'No he hasn't!' 'Oh, murder, he's down!' 'Hoorah, he's up again!' 'Well done, Paddy, hoorah! the gripper's beat at last!' It was remarkable how the sympathies of the people, even when the debt was due to one of their own class, appeared to be generally on the side of the man who was endeavouring to evade the law.

Another singular scene came before me as a grand juror at the assizes of Monaghan. I was appointed one of the committee to visit and inspect the county gaol. Whilst performing this duty, we entered the debtors' yard, and to my utter astonishment, about ten or twelve wild-looking men dropped down suddenly on their knees before me.

'What is the meaning of all this?' I exclaimed, looking in amazement at the kneeling figures.

'Oh yer honour, won't you have mercy on us? here we are, all poor tinants, and oh! for God's sake, let us out to our families, and we'll be good tinants evermore hereafter.'

Shocked and surprised, I assured them I had not put them in gaol, and that I would make immediate enquiry into their cases.

'Oh long life to yer honour for that same,' cried one of the party, who still remained upon their knees, notwithstanding my earnest entreaties to them to rise; 'but bedad it was yer honour's own self and no else put us in; sure wasn't it at the suit of the landlord, and who else set the grippers at us but his agent?'

I was taken quite by surprise. I left the yard as quickly as I could, and having made enquiry into the case, I found they had stated the truth. The clerk in my office had asked me in a quiet business-like tone, 'Should he go on with the decrees as usual?' 'By all means,' said I; not wishing to make any change in the ordinary course of business, but ignorant at the time of the exact proceedings he had alluded to. He had 'gone on with the decrees,' and had placed them in the hands of the grippers; and the result was the sad spectacle of kneeling tenants, in the yard of Monaghan Gaol. They were soon afterwards liberated.

The most remarkable cases, involving the question of 'tenant-right' in its fullest northern development, used also frequently to come before me in my office. It was then the common practice on the estate, when a tenant became insolvent, say a man with five or six acres of land, and when all his sources of raising money were exhausted, that he should come to the office of the estate and consent to his interest in the farm as yearly tenant being sold to some other tenant, approved of by the landlord or his

agent, and that the proceeds should be applied to clear his rent, and pay his numerous debts. It was the usual custom of the estate, under such circumstances, to appoint a day for the sale of the defaulter's 'good-will,' and the bailiff was ordered to give notice to all parties who had any claims against him to appear. A regular schedule of debts was then drawn up by the clerk; each party stated his claim, which was decided upon by the agent to the best of his ability, generally after much wrangling and disputing among themselves, and the purchase-money, frequently amounting to ten or twelve pounds per acre, having been lodged in the office by the tenant selected to succeed to the farm, was distributed to the creditors in the presence of the insolvent, in proportion to their severally proved claims, at as many shillings in the pound as the purchase-money would afford to give. The landlord's rent, being the first charge upon the land, was always paid in full.

I ought perhaps to mention that this purchase-money was given subject to the clear understanding that a new valuation of the estate should be made every twenty years, or thereabouts. It by no means appeared to be given as 'compensation for improvements,' inasmuch as the land to be disposed of under these circumstances was generally in the most exhausted condition, and the buildings in the most neglected state. The money was given by the incoming tenant, simply and solely for the opportunity of occupying the land, as a spot on which to exercise industry, or (to use the expressive phrase generally in vogue at the time) to 'induster upon.'

The system, which I have thus endeavoured to describe, of holding a petty insolvent court for the creditors of the tenants, is still in use upon some of the most respectable and largest estates in the county of Monaghan, and the little insolvent court is duly presided over by the agent;

but it has been discontinued on the estate which was at that time under my management.

At length, as the harvest was gathered in and the month of November drew nigh, at which period I had pledged myself to demand the rents, I began to feel very nervous lest my plan should have failed, and the combination against the payment of rent be continued. I selected therefore two or three tenants, whom I knew had abundance of means to pay, and having visited them and talked the matter over with them in a friendly way, I expressed a hope that they would now come in and pay their rents as usual. They were evidently surprised and very anxious, not having in the least expected that such a demand would be made in such a manner; but though I pressed them to come forward and pay, they declined, saying, 'they would do as others did, but they would not be the first to come in.'

'Well,' said I, 'remember I have come to you now in a friendly way, and asked you as a favour to hold out no longer against your landlord's rights; I know you are well able to pay your rent; if you decline, I shall of course have no alternative but to proceed against you by law.'

'Oh murder! what will I do?' exclaimed the tenant I addressed; 'shure I always told them not to give in, and now you want me to be the first to break the pledge.'

'Quite true,' replied I, 'that is the very reason I came to you; I knew you were a ringleader against the landlord; but you must see the law will overcome you in the end.'

'Oh murder!' he cried again; 'what will I do at all?'

'*Drive in your cattle to the pound*,' said I; 'I will never go out driving again so long as I live; so *drive in your own cattle*, and then I will immediately release them, and you can pay your rent at once. I must have your submission; and if you don't yield, I shall have to come down heavily upon you and to eject you from your farm alto-

gether, a necessity I should greatly regret, even though I am well aware you have been a ringleader in this rebellion.'

'Will any others do the same if I do?' enquired he.

'I can't say,' replied I; 'but I am going to one or two of your neighbours who were nearly as bad as you, and I will put it to them in the same way. If you and they drive in your cattle to the pound in the morning, I will forget all your past misdeeds, and never punish you for them; if you refuse, you must blame yourself for the consequences which may ensue.'

I left him, went to his neighbours, and had nearly the same conversation with them; and to my great delight, in the morning I heard that the pound was filled with the cattle of the ringleaders of the opposition, driven in by themselves!

I at once ordered the liberation of the beasts; the ringleaders came in thankfully, and cheerfully paid their rents; others followed these 'bell-wethers' through the gap, and in a little time the whole estate crowded in to pay so fast that the clerk was occupied receiving rent from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon for several months after the above occurrence.

The combination was now wholly at an end. From that time, until I left, I never had the least difficulty in the management of that estate. The tenants all paid up well; and large arrears, which had been due on my first coming, were quietly and rapidly cleared off.

When perfect order was restored and the rents in full course of being paid, I suggested some alterations in the management of the estate, in a full and detailed report which I then presented to the landlord. My recommendations, however, were not approved. I thought it therefore my duty to leave; and after two years of anxious

labour not unattended with danger, I respectfully resigned my situation, and committed myself again to the old 'battle of life.'*

* I feel bound to say that this estate is now managed upon very different principles from those which prevailed when I succeeded to the agency in 1843. Mr. George Morant, a near relative of the present and late proprietor, is now the agent, and a more straightforward and honourable English gentleman—one more courageous in danger, warmhearted in feeling, or less likely to commit himself to a low or mean action—never trod upon Irish soil.—W. S. T.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POTATO-ROT.

NONE of those who witnessed the scenes which took place in Ireland during the 'potato-rot' and the 'famine years' are likely ever to forget them. These scenes came to pass within a year or two after I had resigned my post as agent to the Shirley estates in the county of Monaghan.

On leaving Carrickmacross I went to reside at Cardtown, my place in the Queen's County. It adjoins an extensive mountain tract of land which I had purchased, and which I had for some years previously been engaged in reclaiming. Having resigned Mr. Shirley's agency, I was able to devote my time and energies more exclusively to this work, and the mode of reclaiming being chiefly through the means of the potato, as the only green crop which grows luxuriantly in rough ground with previously imperfect tilth, I planted each year larger and larger quantities of that root. Guano having been at that time (1845) recently brought into use as a manure, was found to be particularly suited to the production of the potato; I accordingly applied a liberal quantity to the crop, which was most luxuriant, and well repaid the labour, money, and attention necessarily bestowed upon it.

My plan of reclaiming was very simple. The land to be acted on consisted generally of rough mountain pasture covered with heather. There were no stones, or few of sufficient size, to impede the course of the plough. The

land was first limed with eighty barrels* of lime to the Irish acre (about fifty to the statute acre), spread broadcast upon the surface. The land was then ploughed down into what were termed 'lazy beds,' that is, narrow ridges about five feet in width, with a furrow between each ridge. Into these ridges the seed of the potato was put by merely sticking the spade into the rough ground, and dropping in the seed or 'set' at the back of the spade; the spade being then withdrawn, the seed remained two or three inches under the surface. Guano, six hundredweight to the acre, was then scattered over the ridges, care being taken that the guano should not come into immediate contact either with the seed or with the lime. And this being done, the furrows were dug, the clay shovelled over the ridges, and the whole made up into 'lazy beds'—rough underneath where heather and sods lay rudely massed together, but when covered up with the fresh dug soil from the furrows, presenting a neat and finished appearance above. The potato grew to perfection in this rude description of tillage; and whilst it was growing, the heather rotted under the influence of the lime, and, together with the other superabundant vegetable matter, was turned by the action of the lime into a most valuable manure. The guano stimulated an enormous and luxuriant growth, and when the potatoes were in course of being dug out, the act of digging mixed the lime, manure, and the several soils together into an even texture, leaving the land which had hitherto been scarcely worth one shilling per acre, in excellent order for sowing corn crops or grass seeds, and permanently worth at least one pound per acre.

I had taken much pains for some years previously in ascertaining, through repeated experiments, the success of

* The 'barrel' of the country contains thirty-two gallons.

this system of cultivation; and having found that in every case the process of reclamation was repaid, or nearly so, in the first year by the sale of the potato crop alone, leaving behind it land, increased from ten to twenty-fold in value, I planted in the year 1846 about one hundred Irish acres* of mountain land under potatoes, counting, as surely as any farmer can count on reaping any crop, upon a produce worth at least 30*l.* per acre. I was living at this time at Cardtown, where I had been engaged in building large additions to my dwelling house, in fact a new house as it stands at present. My reclamation had succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations, and in the month of July 1846, my potato crop, for its extent and luxuriance, was the wonder of everyone who saw it; and at the very moderate price of threepence per stone, a price potatoes could always then command, I felt certain, humanly speaking, of realising by their sale at least 3,000*l.*

The reclamation of my mountain property had been a subject of considerable interest to many of the most intelligent agriculturists in Ireland. In the first instance, a silver medal, and afterwards a gold medal, had been offered by the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland, 'For the best report on the largest quantity of waste land reclaimed in Ireland,' and in both cases I succeeded in obtaining this honorary distinction. The whole details of the plan, and the cost attendant thereon, were published in the Transactions of the Society, and many people thought, and I was myself amongst the number, that at last one of the great difficulties of Ireland at that day—namely, the reclamation of her waste lands, and the profitable employment of her superabundant labour—was about to be solved by this

* Equal to 162 English or statute acres.

hitherto successful experiment.* For some years I had not less than two hundred labourers, employed constantly at those works, draining, levelling, liming, and the heavy work of sowing and digging out again enormous quantities of potatoes. A more cheering sight it was scarcely possible to conceive than to witness these numerous labourers, employed at good wages themselves, collected from all quarters where labour was abundant, producing food for thousands of people whilst reclaiming one of the wastes of Ireland. But all this passed away like a dream on the sudden failure of the potato, and 'the happy valley,' as the sloping sides of my mountain property of Baureigh, with a clear trout stream running in the hollow, was frequently called by those who visited the works, was by that fearful calamity turned into a valley of woe.

On August 1st of that calamitous year, 1846, I was startled by hearing a sudden and strange rumour that all the potato fields in the district were blighted; and that a stench had arisen emanating from their decaying stalks. I immediately rode up to visit my crop, and test the truth of this report; but I found it as luxuriant as ever, in full blossom, the stalks matted across each other with richness, and promising a splendid produce, without any unpleasant smell whatever. On coming down from the mountain, I rode into the lowland country, and there I found the report to be but too true. The leaves of the potatoes on many fields I passed were quite withered, and a strange stench, such as I had never smelt before, but which became a well-known feature in 'the blight' for years after, filled the atmosphere adjoining each field of potatoes.

The next day I made further enquiries, and I found the

* All the members of the Devon Commission, accompanied by Lord Devon himself, visited these works in their official capacity, and mentioned them most favourably in their report.

disease was fast extending, and on rooting up some of the potato bulbs under the withered stalks, I found that decay had set in, and that the potato was rapidly blackening and melting away. In fields having a luxuriant crop, the stench was generally the first indication of disease, and the withered leaf followed in a day or two afterwards. Much alarm now prevailed in the country; people looked blank enough, as they asked each other if they had seen this new and formidable disease. Those, like me, who had staked a large amount of capital on the crop, hitherto almost a certainty,* and at least as sure as the crop of wheat or turnips or any other agricultural produce, became extremely uneasy; whilst the poorer farmers looked on helplessly and with feelings of dire dismay at the total disappearance of all they had counted on for food.

Each day, from the time I first heard of the disease, I went regularly to visit my splendid mountain crop, and each day saw it apparently further advanced in course of arriving at a healthy and abundant maturity.

On August 6, 1846—I shall not readily forget the day—I rode up as usual to my mountain property, and my feelings may be imagined when before I saw the crop, I smelt the fearful stench, now so well known and recognised as the death-sign of each field of potatoes. I was dismayed indeed, but I rode on; and as I wound down the newly engineered road, running through the heart of the farm, and which forms the regular approach to the steward's house, I could scarcely bear the fearful and strange smell, which came up

* There is no greater fallacy than to suppose that the potato was at that time an uncertain crop. I have been a tolerably extensive tillage-farmer for a great many years, and, until 1846, I never had a failure. My turnips were sometimes poor and thin in dry and parching weather; my wheat was sometimes smutty, and did not turn out well under the flail; but, if I manured my land well, I was always certain of my potato crop.

In my judgment the potato has never been of so good quality, since the disease of 1846, as it was before it.—W. S. T.

so rank from the luxuriant crop then growing all around; no perceptible change, except the smell, had as yet come upon the apparent prosperity of the deceitfully luxuriant stalks, but the experience of the past few days taught me that all was gone, and the crop was utterly worthless.

I need not tell how bitterly I was disappointed, overthrown as all my anticipations of profitable results were by this great calamity, Not only did I foresee the loss of my 3,000*l.*—no small sum to a man who had just surrendered an agency of 1,000*l.*, per annum ; but I felt also, that the hopes of future success, on which I had expended a large capital, and much time and thought for years, were gone—that it would be madness ever to venture on the trial of such a crop again, and that all my labour, and patient experiments, which had hitherto turned out so completely successful, were—by this new and fearful calamity, sent by the special hand of God, and the like of which had never appeared in nature before—utterly blasted.

But upon this I will not dwell. It is enough to say that the luxuriant stalks soon withered, the leaves decayed, the disease extended to the tubers, and the stench from the rotting of such an immense amount of rich vegetable matter became almost intolerable. I saw it fast disappearing and melting away under this fatal disease. I tried to dig the potatoes rapidly, in the hope of saving something; and, in accordance with the advice of Sir Robert Kane and others, I set up a temporary machine for the conversion of the tubers into starch. But the final result was, that the produce of the entire crop yielded *about forty pounds in starch*, whilst the cost of grinding the pulp, and erecting machinery, amounted to *about twice that sum!* My plans, my labour, my 3,000*l.*, and all hopes of future profit by these means, were gone.

But my own losses and disappointments, deeply as I felt

them, were soon merged in the general desolation, misery, and starvation which now rapidly affected the poorer classes around me and throughout Ireland. It is true that in the more cultivated districts of the Queen's County and the midland counties generally, not many deaths occurred from actual starvation. I mean, that people were not found dead on the roads or in the fields from sudden deprivation of food; but they sank gradually from impure and insufficient diet; and fever, dysentery, the crowding in the workhouse or hardship on the relief works, carried thousands to a premature grave. The crop of all crops, on which they depended for food, had suddenly melted away, and no adequate arrangements had been made to meet this calamity, —the extent of which was so sudden and so terrible that no one had appreciated it in time—and thus thousands perished almost without an effort to save themselves.

Public relief works were soon set on foot by the Government. Presentment sessions were held, relief committees organised, and the roads were tortured and cut up; hills were lowered, and hollows filled, and wages were paid for half or quarter work—but still the people died. Soup kitchens and 'stirabout houses' were resorted to. Free trade was partially adopted. Indian meal poured into Ireland; individual exertions and charity abounded to an enormous extent—but still the people died. Many of the highest and noblest in the land, both men and women, lost their lives, or contracted diseases from which they never afterwards recovered, in their endeavours to stay this fearful calamity—but still the people died. We did what we could at Cardtown, but though the distress there was far less than in most other places, yet our efforts seemed a mere drop of oil let fall upon the ocean of misery around us—and still the people died!

Before the close of this year, being wholly unable from

private sources to grapple with the vast extent of misery around us, and seeing also that there was no hope of the recovery of the potato, and that my occupation as an extensive reclaimer of land through its medium was suddenly brought to a close, I resolved to adapt myself as well as I could to this new condition of affairs. By this time an outcry had arisen against the public road relief works, and everyone demanded some more useful and '*reproductive*' employment for the masses, now dependent on public charity. The Government thus was much in want of some one to set on foot a practicable plan to meet this public demand, and to organise a system of reproductive works, such as draining, subsoiling, liming, &c., and thus as it were, draw the people from the roads into the fields. Acting therefore on the experience I had already acquired in the reclamation of land, I drew up a complete plan, embracing forms and specifications &c., for draining, subsoiling, and the like. I then went to Dublin and laid the whole project before the Board of Public Works. Colonel Jones, Sir Richard Griffith, and Mr. Mulvany were then the Commissioners of Public Works engaged in this department. They carefully examined my plans, and at once closed with my proposal for employment, granting me a salary of 500*l.* per annum, together with my travelling expenses, and sent me forthwith to open the whole system, and practically to test its working in the old well-known ground of the Barony of Farney. Here I remained five weeks, apparently only laying out drainage and setting the people to work, but really organising the system of employment which was afterwards adopted and carried out under the provisions known as 'Mr. Labouchere's letter.' The whole of the forms of estimate, specifications, &c., were there prepared and carefully tested by me, and at the end of five weeks' hard work, during which I laboured at least fourteen

hours per diem, either at my desk or in the field, I was able to send details of the whole system to be printed, and immediately on their completion, the drainage works were commenced in every county in Ireland. I returned soon after to the Queen's County, over almost the whole of which I had especial charge as far as those works were concerned, and I continued for about two years superintending this execution of improvements, which, however imperfect in consequence of the weakness of the labourers, and the difficulty of organising a new and extensive working staff, yet laid the foundation for that most valuable law, the 'Land Improvement Act,' and the wide-spread system of drainage which has since prevailed over Ireland.

Such was my first practical acquaintance with the fearful 'Potato-rot' of 1846, the effects of which have produced a social revolution in Ireland. It hurried on the introduction of free trade. It indirectly brought about the arterial drainage of many of the main rivers of Ireland. It created the Land Improvement Act. It brought into existence the Incumbered Estates Court, one of the most important Acts ever passed in Ireland. It drove some millions of people to the other side of the Atlantic, and sent many thousands to an untimely grave. It broke up to a great extent the small farms of Ireland. It relieved the plethora of the labour market. It removed the needy country gentlemen, and forced them to sell their estates into the hands of capitalists. It unlocked millions of capital, since then laid out on the improved cultivation of the land. It brought over hundreds of Scotchmen and Englishmen who have farmed on an extended and more scientific system than had before then been the practice in Ireland; and, in short, it has produced a revolution in the country which has lasted ever since. Its immediate effects were so appalling, and its final results so remarkable, that these few notes descriptive

of its first appearance, as it came under my own immediate observation, may not prove wholly without interest.

But I must record some features of the potato-rot as it appeared in other districts less favoured than the Queen's County. The population of that county was never very excessive, the farms were moderate in size, and valuable as the potato was as an esculent, and most useful as I had proved it to be in the reclamation of waste lands, yet it rarely formed, as in other districts, the sole food of the people. During the period whilst I was engaged in organising the system of drainage for the Board of Works, fearful scenes were being enacted in other parts, and especially in the south and west of Ireland. There the cottier system prevailed to its fullest extent; and in the mountain districts where but little corn was grown, and where the people lived almost exclusively upon the potato, the most dire distress arose. Dark whisperings and rumours of famine in its most appalling form began to reach us, but still we could scarcely believe that men, women, and children were actually dying of starvation in thousands. *Yet so it was.* They died in their mountain glens, they died along the sea-coast, they died on the roads, and they died in the fields; they wandered into the towns, and died in the streets; they closed their cabin doors, and lay down upon their beds, and died of actual starvation in their houses.

To us, even at the time, it appeared almost incredible that such things should be. But a cry soon arose from the west, and especially from the district of Skibbereen and Schull in the county of Cork, which left no further doubt as to the real position of affairs—hundreds, nay thousands, of people had died and were dying in those districts of absolute direct starvation.

It is not my object or intention here to enter into any

description of the arrangements which were made by Government to meet this dire calamity. To those who seek for accurate information on this head, I would recommend the perusal of a small volume entitled 'The Irish Crisis, by C. E. Trevelyan, Esq., reprinted from the "Edinburgh Review."' In it they will find all the information they can require. My present intention is merely to state what occurred under my own observation, or that of my immediate friends. When first this dreadful cry resounded through the land, the question which occurred to every thinking and practical mind was, '*Why should these things be?*' Ireland was not like any part of India, cut off from extraneous supplies. It was true the potatoes had rotted, and it was true the people had depended on the potato almost alone for food. But there was abundance of corn, abundance of flour, and abundance of meal in the country, not to speak of herds of sheep and cattle innumerable; and in the midst of such plenty, *why should the people die?* There was also abundance of money to purchase food: money was freely offered from many quarters, and was ready to flow forth in a mighty stream from the charitable people of England to almost any extent. If so, I may again ask, *why should the people die?*

To solve this problem some friends and relatives of mine proposed to visit the then notoriously distressed district of Schull, in the west of the county of Cork, and endeavour to ascertain for themselves the cause of this extraordinary position of affairs. Accordingly the Rev. Frederick F. Trench, a gentleman well known for his philanthropy, and the Rev. Richard C. Trench, then rector of Itchenstoke in Hampshire—now Archbishop of Dublin—agreed to visit the district in person. The result of their enquiries was very simple. There was, as I have stated, abundance of corn and abundance of meal within some few miles of the

district, and no lack of funds to purchase these provisions; and yet in near proximity to this plenty, the people were dying by hundreds, of actual dire starvation, merely for want of some one with sufficient energy and powers of organisation *to bring the food and the people together.* This was the apparently simple problem to be solved, and to effect it they set themselves vigorously to work. In one place they found a most benevolent clergyman, who having obtained large funds from England to mitigate the famine, appeared in the morning at his own hall door, and threw handfuls of shillings and sixpences amongst the crowd who had collected to receive the charity. Amiable gentleman no doubt he was, and most honourable in the distribution of all he had received; but he forgot that starving people could not eat sixpences or shillings, and the food was some ten miles off.* The people had no strength nor energy to seek, purchase, or cook meal or flour, and with the silver in their hands, they died. In another place they found the priest of the parish utterly paralysed by the magnitude of the desolation around him. He had given all he had to the people, there was no food whatever in his house, and he stood really in danger of being starved himself, with money in his pocket, and abundance of corn near at hand.† Such was the position of affairs—the people dying, plenty of food within reach, plenty of money to purchase it, plenty of fish in the sea adjoining—but no one with forethought and arrangement enough to cook the victuals, catch the fish, draw the corn across the mountains, and bring the food and the people together!

* This excellent and amiable man died soon after from the effects of his constant labours amongst the poor people around him. His constitution gave way under the combined pressure of anxiety, sorrow, low fever, and putrid air, and that, under ordinary circumstances, in one of the healthiest spots in Ireland.

† The sea along the coast abounded with fish, but there were no nets, no boats, and no one to organise the simplest fishing operations.

The plan adopted by these energetic philanthropists was very plain and simple. They first sought for funds; and the appeal was immediately and most generously responded to. They then engaged active earnest men, as temporary agents, over a district containing some sixty-seven townlands. And having selected the places most suitable for their operations, they opened what were then termed 'soup kitchens,' but what were really *depôts of boiled meal*, made into a thick nutritious food which in Ireland is called '*stirabout*.' It is perhaps the simplest and most palatable form in which a wholesome well-cooked food can be obtained cheaply in half-an-hour. These depôts, of which there were nineteen in the district, were placed within two or three miles of each other, sufficiently near to enable all those who wanted food, and who were willing and able to walk a short distance, to obtain at least one good meal each day, the only condition or stipulation being that they should come as clean as their case admitted, to the food depôt.

I will not venture to describe the harrowing scenes which presented themselves to these gentlemen and their assistants. I will not dilate upon the 'sliding coffin,'* through which so many bodies were passed into the same open grave, it being impossible to procure coffins for all; nor upon the emaciated forms which crawled for food to the newly-established depôts. Suffice it to say, that in a very brief period, namely, from April 1, until May 10, 1847, they distributed, free, to the starving population, 102,129 meals within a district comprising sixty-seven townlands: in other words, they fed with one good meal per diem 2,553 persons for forty consecutive days at the wonderfully moderate cost of *2d.* per meal, inclusive of all expenses.

* A coffin made with a sliding bottom, so that, by drawing out the bottom, the body fell into the grave, and the coffin could be used again for the same purpose.

A full statement of receipts and expenditure, by the Rev. F. F. Trench, at Schull and other places in the south-west of the county of Cork, which was published at the time, gives a faithful, but brief description of the efforts there made to save life. After giving a detailed list of subscribers, and the sums subscribed by each, he gives a 'statement of the receipts and expenditure' of this trust money (by far the greater portion of which was subscribed amongst his own friends and relations in Ireland), showing that he had received on the whole 1787*l.* 13*s.* 2*d.*, and had expended 1016*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.*, leaving a balance, then placed in the funds for ulterior charity, of 771*l.* 6*s.* 10*d.*

Mr. Trench's statement 'to the subscribers' might be read with interest by those anxious to inform themselves on this subject, and also the letters addressed to him by the Rev. James Barry, Roman Catholic priest at the Ballydehob. They set forth in strong language the estimation in which the efforts of these gentlemen were regarded; nor were they suspended until the Government undertook the task of feeding the people upon itself, which was here initiated by the philanthropic men alluded to.

I have purposely avoided giving any details of individual suffering in the harrowing forms in which they presented themselves to myself during that fearful period. A book could be written on this subject; but of what avail would it be now? It is generally admitted that about 200,000 persons died of the famine in Ireland; and my object is to show that if proper precautions had been taken in time—by energetic men capable of undertaking the task—to feed those who were unable to work, the famine would have been stayed, and most of the people saved.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXODUS. KENMARE.

IN the winter of the year 1849, I had nearly concluded my public labours under the Land Improvement Act; and I was then endeavouring, by other systems than that of the potato, to continue the reclamation of my mountain property, when I received a communication from Mr. Price, then Lord Lansdowne's agent in the Queen's County, stating that his lordship was desirous of appointing some gentleman upon whose judgment he could rely, to visit his estates in Kerry, audit the accounts, and report to him generally upon the condition of his property in that district. My name had been mentioned to his lordship, and he had approved of the nomination.

My terms were at once arranged, and I started for Kerry on my new mission. On my arrival at Kenmare, I found the agent of the estate waiting to receive me at the hotel. He was an elderly gentleman of easy habits; kind-hearted and honourable, but scarcely capable of grappling with the serious difficulties which at that time surrounded him as responsible manager of so large and important a property.

I spent six weeks in Kerry; and having completed an elaborate report describing the past and present condition, and probable future of the estate, I forwarded it to Lord Lansdowne.

His lordship, shortly after its receipt, sent for me to London, and offered me the agency of his Kerry property.

Having accepted the proposal thus kindly made, I left London for Ireland, and proceeded forthwith to Kenmare.

The district of Kenmare at that period—January 1850—was not in a desirable condition. 'The famine,' in the strict acceptation of the term, was then nearly over, but it had left a trail behind it, almost as formidable as its presence. The mountain district around Kenmare had not escaped its effects. The circumstances of that country were peculiar. The Union of Kenmare consists of a vast valley, with an arm of the sea, usually called the 'Kenmare River,' running up the centre for the distance of about six and twenty miles. On either side of this estuary, the mountains rise continuously to a distance of seven or eight miles from the shore, thus making an enormous valley about thirty miles long and sixteen wide. Within this district but little corn is grown. The portions of land reclaimed from the rocky mountains, on which alone corn could be raised, are so small, that they are barely sufficient to grow potatoes and turnips enough for the consumption of the people, and their cattle, throughout the winter. The exports of the district may be said to consist exclusively of butter, young cattle, and sheep—whilst the inhabitants subsisted on potatoes, milk, and butter, together with cured fish, bacon, and a very small supply of oats, grown upon the reclaimed portion of land amongst the rocks. There is no access nearer than Killarney, which is twenty miles distant, to any corn-growing country.

The estate of the Marquis of Lansdowne in the Union of Kenmare had at this time been much neglected by its local manager. It consists of about sixty thousand acres, and comprises nearly one-third of the whole union. No restraint whatever had been put upon the system of sub-division of land. Boys and girls intermarried unchecked, each at the age of seventeen or eighteen, without thinking it necessary to make any provision whatever for their

future subsistence, beyond a shed to lie down in, and a small plot of land whereon to grow potatoes. Innumerable squatters had settled themselves, unquestioned, in huts on the mountain sides and in the valleys, without any sufficient provision for their maintenance during the year. They sowed their patches of potatoes early in spring, using sea-weed alone as a manure. Then as the scarce seasons of spring and summer came on, they nailed up the doors of their huts, took all their children along with them, together with a few tin cans, and started on a migratory and piratical expedition over the counties of Kerry and Cork, trusting to their adroitness and good luck in begging, to keep the family alive till the potato crop again came in. And thus, in consequence of the neglect or supineness of the agent, who—in direct violation of his lordship's instructions, and without his knowledge—allowed numbers of strangers and young married couples to settle on his estate, paying no rent, and almost without any visible means of subsistence, not only the finances, but the character and condition of the property, were at a very low ebb indeed. The estate, in fact, was swamped with paupers.

The desolation which a sudden failure of the staple food of the people, in a remote valley like this, must necessarily bring along with it, may be imagined. The scenes in Schull and Skibbereen were here enacted over again. As the potato melted away before the eyes of the people, they looked on in dismay and terror; but there was no one with energy enough to import corn to supply its place. Half Ireland was stunned by the suddenness of the calamity, and Kenmare was completely paralysed. Begging, as of old, was now out of the question, as all were nearly equally poor; and many of the wretched people succumbed to their fate almost without a struggle.

The agent of the estate, who on my first arrival was

my chief informant, did not seem to consider that anyone in particular was to blame for this. He talked of it as 'the hand of God.' The whole thing had come so suddenly, and all those residing at Kenmare were so entirely unprepared, and incapable of meeting it, that an efficient remedy was utterly out of the question.

In the midst of this most dire distress, Lord Lansdowne came forward in the most generous manner, and offered money to any extent—in fact a *carte blanche*—to save the lives of the people. But there was no one in the country capable of undertaking the task. The magnitude of the suffering seemed to paralyse all local efforts to avert it, and his lordship's unbounded liberality was but little tested or applied. And thus almost in the midst of plenty —for there was abundance of corn within a few miles distant—famine stalked unmolested through the glens and mountains of Glanerought.*

It was indeed admitted to me by many intelligent men, that if there had been one man of firmness and energy in the district, he might have saved thousands of lives by the adoption of the same kind of plan as that so successfully organised by the Messrs. Trench in the west of the neighbouring county of Cork, and which had turned out so effective even in a quarter with which they were wholly unconnected. But the local gentry were paralysed, the tradesmen were paralysed, the people were paralysed, and the cottiers and squatters and small holders, who now saw the consequences of their previous folly in unlimited subdivision, unable from hunger to work, and hopeless of any sufficient relief from extraneous sources, sank quietly down, some in their houses, some at the 'relief works,' and died almost without a struggle.†

* The name of the barony in which Lord Lansdowne's Kerry estate is situated.

† Several of the respectable shopkeepers in the town of Kenmare informed

Such were the scenes which had taken place in that then secluded valley, not long previous to my arrival.

When I first reached Kenmare in the winter of 1849–50, the form of destitution had changed in some degree; but it was still very great. It was true that people no longer died of starvation; but they were dying nearly as fast of fever, dysentery, and scurvy within the walls of the workhouse. Food there was now in abundance; but to entitle the people to obtain it, they were compelled to go into the workhouse and 'auxiliary sheds,' * until these were crowded almost to suffocation. And although out-door relief had also been resorted to in consequence of the impossibility of finding room for the paupers in the houses, yet the quantity of food given was so small, and *the previous destitution through which they had passed was so severe*, that nearly as many died now under the hands of the guardians, as had perished before by actual starvation.

In illustration of this state of things, I may mention an event which occurred to myself, soon after my arrival in the district.

I was in the habit, at this time, of attending the meetings of the Poor Law Board of Guardians, of which I had not yet become a member.

The numbers at that time receiving relief in the whole union of Kenmare were somewhere about ten thousand. In June 1849, six months previous to my coming, they had reached the highest point, about ten thousand four hundred

me that at this period four or five dead bodies were frequently found in the streets, or on the flags, in the morning, the remains of poor people who had wandered in from the country in search of food; and that they dreaded to open their doors lest a corpse should be found leaning against it.

* The workhouses being at this time quite unable to hold the numbers who crowded in, large auxiliary timber sheds were erected in convenient places, and in these were housed immense numbers of paupers, for whom room could not be found in the main building.

persons being then in receipt of relief. They had diminished slightly at the time to which I allude.

After a day of painful toil in the duty of admitting paupers, I was obliged to leave before the board broke up, as I had important business in Killarney, and I started on horseback to ride across the mountains. I had not gone far, when a messenger came posting after me to say, that the government officer, then in attendance at the board, was very desirous to see me. I asked if the case was urgent, and was told that it was very urgent indeed.

I returned of course, and found the members of the board looking certainly blank enough. The officer immediately informed me that the contractor, to whom a very large amount of money was due, had positively refused to give another sack of meal unless he received an instalment in cash that day. No one could well blame him. The board was bankrupt; repeated promises had been made to him of payments, which had not been fulfilled, and credit was utterly gone. At length I proposed that we should all put our hands in our pockets, and offered, on my own account, to double whatever total the rest of the board would subscribe amongst them, and take chance for the union refunding the money afterwards. The board however declined, and I could not get a 10*l.* note subscribed. I called the government officer aside into another room and said, 'Will you tell me exactly what you think will be the consequence if the contractor refuses to let us have another load of meal?'

'I have thought over this,' he replied; 'and considering the numbers who are depending exclusively on this food and who are already in the last stage of destitution, on out-door relief, in distant parts of the union where this meal should now be sent, I feel confident that not less than from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred persons will be dead before twenty-four hours are over.'

'Is it possible?' said I—'Can this really be true?'

'I think, Sir,' said he, 'I am rather under than over the estimate.'

I could no longer hesitate. I fortunately happened to have some private funds in bank. I made the necessary arrangements for the payment of a portion of the debt, and the contractor forwarded the meal. Even now I tremble to think what might have occurred, either if I had gone too far towards Killarney to be recalled, or if I had not happened, at the time, to be in a position to make the necessary arrangements.

It may readily be supposed that this was a very serious state of things for a stranger to enter upon as the agent of Lord Lansdowne's estate in this union, and consequently, as such, the most responsible person in the district. I can hardly describe my anxiety of mind, as day after day the increasing responsibilities of the post I had assumed developed themselves before me. No one else would now stir. They had not done much before; and now that I took a prominent part amongst them, they held back and would do nothing. All, indeed, cried aloud that 'something ought to be done,' but few were able or willing to subscribe, and none had energy enough to attempt to grapple with the difficulty. Thus by degrees I felt myself placed almost alone, to meet as I could this fearful mass of pauperism.

The position was a most anxious one; but I endeavoured to meet it steadily. Lord Lansdowne had kindly intimated to me that funds on the most liberal scale—in fact to any amount required—would be at my disposal for anything which would be for the advantage of the district; and the development of my plans was looked forward to with much anxiety. I remember a curious scene which took place about this time.

I was sitting one evening in my study—I think it was in

the month of May 1850—when I heard a strange humming noise as of the suppressed voices of many hundred people. It came from the direction of the 'Brewery,' a short distance from Lansdowne Lodge. The noise was a very peculiar one, and unlike anything I had ever heard before. I was on the point of rising to ascertain the cause, when the servant rushed into the room, exclaiming, 'Oh, Sir, the Brewery is on fire!' This brewery was an enormous building, formerly used for the purpose designated by its name, but now converted into an auxiliary poor-house, in which about three hundred pauper children were lodged. I went down without a moment's delay; and just as I entered the premises, I met the schoolmaster, who had charge of the building and all the children in it. I found him in great alarm.

'What is the matter?' I asked.

'I don't know, Sir,' he replied. 'I believe the brewery is on fire; but I dare not open the door to see, as the children have got the alarm inside, and have become actually mad with fright; they would surely rush down the high stone steps, and half of them be killed in the panic.'

'Is there only one way out for the whole three hundred children?' I asked.

'That is all,' replied he.

'Give me the key,' and I went up the stairs to the door. A set of stone steps, with a stone parapet along them, led to a small square flagged platform immediately outside the door of the building. I saw at once that the man was so far right, that if the door were suddenly opened, a rush from the inside would inevitably be made, which must drive numbers over the parapet, and many would probably be killed by the fall, or smothered by the others passing over them, before such a number of children in the wild state of panic, in which they then were, could emerge from the building.

Seeing all this at a glance, I nevertheless opened the door, and pressing my foot against the low stone parapet on the opposite side of the platform, so as to retain firm possession of the doorway, I looked into the building. The sight which presented itself was strange and wild. Inside was a large room, in which as many children as it could possibly hold were crammed. The panic of the fire had seized them, and they were fast losing their senses with terror. The eyes of some were already staring wide, almost idiotic in expression. Others clenched their little fists, and ground their teeth, and threatened me in the most furious manner. And in some cases grown-up women—nurses they appeared to be—with infants in their arms, cursed and swore at me, insisting that I was there to prevent their getting out, and that I was determined to burn them all together in the house. It was a dreadful scene of terror and despair, and the panic was evidently increasing.

I immediately entered the room, closing the door behind me, and raising my hand, I said in a loud voice,

'I will let you all out this moment. There is no danger whatever. Be quiet and you shall all get out.'

But I might as well have spoken to maniacs in Bedlam. They raised a panic-stricken shriek in reply, and struggled to get at the door. There was nothing now to be done but to let them out as carefully as I could. So I got outside the door again, and opened a few inches to prevent a rush of the children over the parapet; and thus, letting them out one by one, kicking, screaming, and some of them actually biting at my legs, they all got safely down the stone steps, and not a single one of them was hurt. I then went inside to examine the house for the fire. There was none: it was altogether a false alarm!

On my return to the door, the scene in the courtyard below was a very curious one. About eighteen or twenty

children, chiefly boys of about twelve years of age, were lying on the gravel, some with their eyes staring and their bodies working in hideous contortions, completely idiotic from the fright. Some were quite motionless, but doubled back as if under the influence of cramp or tetanus. Some were apparently dead. So strange a scene of killed and wounded I never saw in my life. The excellent doctor* of the union soon afterwards arrived, and I handed over the patients to him. To my surprise he seemed to think but little of the matter, and assured me they would soon recover. But he admitted that had I opened the door suddenly, without insisting as I stood by that each should have time to reach the bottom of the steps in safety, vast numbers must inevitably have been killed.

In an hour or two most of them had recovered, and with some difficulty we got them all again into the building and to bed. I walked all through the wards just as the children were going to rest, and it was curious to watch the starts and mutterings and convulsive sobs which numbers exhibited as they gradually dropped asleep. It was evident that the panic had greatly affected the entire mass of children. I had never seen a panic, though I had often heard of one, before. It is not by any means a pleasant thing to witness.

Such was the state of things in Kenmare at the time to which I allude.

My first step was to endeavour to relieve, in some degree, the plethora of the poor-house; and for this purpose I offered employment, outside, to all those who had entered it chargeable to Lord Lansdowne's estate. I promised them reasonable wages in draining, subsoiling, removing rocks

* Dr. George M. Mayberry. Nothing could exceed his courage and attention to the poor in those trying times as medical attendant at the workhouse. I am happy to say he still holds his post, with advantage to all concerned.

and stones, and such like out-of-door labour. No sooner had I made this proposal, than about three hundred gaunt half-famished men, and nearly as many boys and women, appeared in my field next morning, all of them claiming my promise, but none of them having any tools wherewith to labour! Here was a new dilemma. The offer of employment had been accepted with only too great avidity; but the creatures had not a spade, nor a pick-axe, nor a working tool amongst them. Fortunately a large depôt of these articles had lain stored in a tool-house hard by—remnants of the public works. These I immediately appropriated, and before noon about one half the people were employed. The remainder I sent again to the poor-house, telling them, however, to return the next day and I would endeavour to procure implements to lend them. They did so. And partly by buying, partly by borrowing, and by making some of them work with their hands alone, I managed to keep most of them employed.

But although at first this system met with great approbation in the district, yet I found it quite impossible to continue it. In the first place, not much more than one-fourth of a reasonable value in labour could be obtained from those who proposed to work; and in the next, being now in employment, they had of course to leave the work-house. Where then were they to lodge at night? Every lane, every alley, every cabin in the town was crowded to excess with these unhappy work-people, and they slept by threes and fours together wherever they could get a pallet of straw to lie upon. But I plainly saw that this could not go on. The townspeople began to complain of the scenes in the town at night; and when a wet day came and the people could not work, nearly one half of them were obliged to return for the day to the poor-house, creating immense confusion by the sudden influx of such a body of famished

new-comers, and the remainder wandered about, objects of the utmost compassion.

Accordingly, after the most anxious deliberation, I arrived at the final conclusion that this system could not be carried on. I felt it would be madness in me to assume the responsibility of keeping three hundred paupers in employment, most of them removed only one step from the grave, as, if any accident should happen to prevent them from obtaining *daily pay*, whether they had work or not, which I had hitherto managed at great inconvenience to give them, many lives might be lost in a night; a result for which I—not in law, but perhaps in public opinion—might immediately be called to account.

I therefore resolved to put into practice a scheme which I had meditated for a long time previously, namely, to go myself to Lord Lansdowne at Bowood, to state to him the whole circumstances of the case, and to recommend him to adopt an extensive system of voluntary emigration as the only practicable and effective means of relieving this frightful destitution.

This plan, accordingly, I carried into effect. And in the month of November, 1850, I went over to England; and having been invited to visit his lordship at Bowood, I remained there five days.

During my stay I had frequent and lengthened interviews with that most enlightened and liberal statesman. The broad sketch of the plan I laid before him was as follows: I showed him by the poor-house returns, that the number of paupers off his estate and receiving relief in the workhouse amounted to about three thousand. That I was wholly unable to undertake the employment of these people in their present condition, on reproductive works; and that if left in the workhouse, the smallest amount they could possibly cost would be 5*l.* per head per annum, and thus

that the poor rates must necessarily amount, for some years to come, to 15,000*l.* per annum, unless these people died or left—and the latter was not probable. I stated also, that hitherto the people had been kept alive in the workhouse by grants from the rates in aid and other public money; but that this could not always go on. That the valuation of his estate in that district scarcely reached 10,000*l.* per annum; and thus, that the poor rates necessary to be raised in the future off the estate to support this number of people, would amount to at least thirty shillings in the pound. I explained further to him, that under these circumstances, inasmuch as the poor rates were a charge prior to the rent, it would be impossible for his lordship to expect any rent whatever out of his estate for many years to come.

The remedy I proposed was as follows. That he should forthwith offer *free emigration* to every man, woman, and child now in the poor-house and *chargeable to his estate.* That I had been in communication with an Emigration Agent, who had offered to contract to take them to whatever port in America each pleased, at a reasonable rate per head. That even supposing they all accepted this offer, the total, together with a small sum per head for outfit and a few shillings on landing, would not exceed from 13,000*l.* to 14,000*l.*, a sum less than it would cost to support them in the workhouse for a single year. That in the one case he would not only free his estate of this mass of pauperism which had been allowed to accumulate upon it, but would put the people themselves in a far better way of earning their bread hereafter; whereas by feeding and retaining them where they were, they must remain as a millstone around the neck of his estate, and prevent its rise for many years to come; and I plainly proved that it would be cheaper to him, and *better for them,* to pay for their

emigration at once, than to continue to support them at home.

His lordship discussed the matter very fully, and with that kindness, good sense, and liberality which characterised all his acts; and on my leaving Bowood he gave me an order for 8,000*l.* wherewith to commence the system of emigration, with a full understanding that more should be forthcoming if required.

I shall not readily forget the scenes that occurred in Kenmare when I returned, and announced that I was prepared at Lord Lansdowne's expense to send to America every one now in the poor-house who was chargeable to his lordship's estate, and who desired to go; leaving each to select what port in America he pleased—whether Boston, New York, New Orleans, or Quebec.

The announcement at first was scarcely credited: it was considered by the paupers to be too good news to be true. But when it began to be believed and appreciated, a rush was made to get away at once.

The organisation of the system required, however, much care and thought.

The mode adopted was as follows:—two hundred each week were selected of those apparently most suited for emigration; and having arranged their slender outfit, a steady man, on whom I could depend, Mr. Jeremiah O'Shea, was employed to take charge of them on their journey to Cork, and not to leave them nor allow them to scatter, until he saw them safely on board the emigrant ship. This plan succeeded admirably; and week after week, to the astonishment of the good people of Cork, and sometimes not a little to their dismay, a batch of two hundred paupers appeared on the quays of Cork, bound for the Far West.

A cry was now raised that I was exterminating the people. But the people knew well that those who now

cried loudest had given them no help when in the extremity of their distress, and they rushed from the country like a panic-stricken throng, each only fearing that the funds at my disposal might fail before he and his family could get their passage.

So great was the rush from the poor-house to emigrate, and so great was the influx into the house to qualify, (as I generally required the application of that sure test of abject poverty before I gave an order for emigration), that the guardians became uneasy, and said the poor-house would be filled with those seeking emigration, even faster than it could be emptied. But I told them not to be alarmed—that all demands should be met. And thus, two hundred after two hundred, week after week, departed for Cork, until the poor-house was nearly emptied of paupers chargeable to the Lansdowne estate; and in little more than a year 3,500 paupers had left Kenmare for America, all free emigrants, without any ejectments having been brought against them to enforce it, or the slightest pressure put upon them to go.

Matters now began to right themselves; only some fifty or sixty paupers remained in the house, chargeable to the property over which I had the care, and Lord Lansdowne's estate at length breathed freely.

It must be admitted that the paupers despatched to America on such a sudden pressure as this, were of a very motley type; and a strange figure these wild batches of two hundred each—most of them speaking only the Irish language—made in the streets of Cork, as well as on the quays of Liverpool and America. There was great difficulty in keeping them from breaking loose from the ship, not only in Cork, but in Liverpool, where the ships touched before they left for the West. Their chief device was to escape out of the ships almost naked, to hide all their good

clothes which had been furnished them as an outfit, and to appear only in their worst rags. In this costume they took delight in rushing through the streets of Cork and Liverpool in large bodies, to the real terror of the inhabitants. In short, I do believe that so strange, unmanageable, and wild a crew had never before left the shores of Ireland. But notwithstanding their apparent poverty, they were all in the most uproarious spirits; there was no crying nor lamentation, as is usual on such occasions; all was delight at having escaped the deadly workhouse.

I need hardly dilate upon the abuse and vituperation which the adoption of such an extensive system of emigration brought down upon me from many well-known quarters. The whole thing had been done so quickly, that no efforts of opponents could in the least prevail against it; but no sooner was it completed than I became the object of the vilest and most bitter abuse. I was accused of an extensive system of 'clearing the land *by eviction*,' though I had not evicted a single tenant for the purpose, nor sent one person away, except by the earnest entreaty of the emigrant himself. But I pass over the system of falsehood and misrepresentation which then prevailed and which has since then prevailed, even in a more virulent degree. When necessary, I explained my conduct to my noble employer, Lord Lansdowne; and his lordship in every case thoroughly approved of what I had done. By degrees this abuse subsided, and the most sensible people in the district admitted that an inestimable benefit had been rendered to Kenmare.

I am happy to say that the most favourable accounts have been received—and are to this day coming back—from every quarter to which the emigrants were despatched. Money in large quantities has been sent home by them to

their friends. Happily no accident ever occurred to a single ship which carried out the Kenmare emigrants. Almost all, down even to the widows and children, found employment soon after landing, and escaped the pestilence of the workhouse; and to this hour I can never experience any other feelings but those of pleasure and gratification at having been the means of sending so many miserable beings to a land far richer and more prosperous than Ireland. The condition of the estate outside the poor-house was also vastly improved. Great numbers of the smaller class of tenantry, men whose holdings amounted in value to five shillings, ten shillings, or one pound per annum, and who could scarcely be expected to find the means of decent support on such a holding—even though they paid no rent at all—now voluntarily gave up their plots of land, and most gladly emigrated to the Far West. These plots were added to the adjoining tenants' farms; and thus the number of tenants on the rent-roll were considerably reduced. Vast numbers of cottiers, or under-tenants also, as well as the small farmers, left; and at last a fair equilibrium was established between the demand and supply of labour. In short, the famine was over, and Lord Lansdowne's estate was righted.*

* The following letter appeared in 'The Times' of August 10, 1868.

To the Editor of The Times.

'SIR,—With reference to the interesting account in "The Times" of this morning of the departure yesterday on board the "St. Lawrence" of a number of emigrants from the East of London, I am anxious to state a few particulars regarding the "party of emigrants" therein mentioned as having been "sent out by some benevolent ladies living in the West-end."

'The East-end Emigration Society *is doing an excellent work in emigrating distressed families, principally from Poplar;* but I am informed by the secretary that the funds of that society can only be applied to the assistance of people whose sufferings are caused by the depression in the London shipbuilding trade (all men connected with strikes being, of course, excluded). Some friends have therefore felt anxious to assist a few of the many half-starving

I will here mention an anecdote of a newspaper reporter, which occurred to me about that time.

I was walking one day in company with some other guardians, from the poor-house to Lansdowne Lodge, after a meeting of the Board, when a man dressed in thread-bare black, but with a jaunty and impudent air, came up to me and said—

'Are you Mr. Trench, Sir?'

though respectable people to emigrate from other districts in the East of London.

'One party yesterday consisted of fifteen families, numbering, in all, seventy-eight souls. Seven of these families came from Whitechapel, three from Clerkenwell, one from St. Luke's, two from St. George's-in-the-East, and one from Bromley. The men had been occupied in various trades and employments. There were labourers of all sorts. One man had been employed in a sugarboiling house, and, having been discharged on the closing of the business with a thirty years' good character, has been since last winter compelled to work in the Union stoneyard to keep his family from starving. Owing to misinformation as to the hour of the departure of the "St. Lawrence" from the docks I was not present at the embarkation of the emigrants, but Lady Mary Feilding, Mrs. Hobart, and myself and other friends went on board the ship at Gravesend, and found all our people comfortably settled, very grateful for the help they had received, and full of hope for the future. Owing to the letters kindly written on the behalf of our party by the Hon. John Rose, the Canadian Minister of Finance, to the authorities in Canada, we have no fears as to the reception which the emigrants will meet with on landing in Quebec. Mr. H. F. Lynn, who is much interested in the subject of emigration, will leave this country for Quebec next week, and has kindly promised to look after our emigrants, and let us know how they succeed.

'I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

'F. J. HOBART.

'15 Eccleston Square, Aug. 8.'

See also a letter from Miss Maria Rye in 'Times' of July 4, 1868, giving an account of the success of a number of emigrants taken out by her to Canada, and a leading article thereon, *highly commending the system*: '*Emigration from England* appears now to be looked upon as *the greatest blessing which can be conferred upon her suffering poor;* and the promoters of it, whether male or female, and in whatever rank of life they move—and there are some amongst the highest—are held forth to the public *as the benefactors and philanthropists of the age. In Ireland*, which may certainly be considered as much over-populated as England, and whose poor are quite as miserable, should anyone venture to advocate emigration as a remedy for their sufferings, no matter how kindly or liberally it might be conducted, he is denounced as an enemy to his country and as a heartless promoter of the emigrants' mournful wail.'

'I am,' replied I.

'A few words with you apart, if you please,' said he.

I dropped a little behind with him, and asked him what he wanted.

'A nice country this, Sir,' he remarked.

'Yes,' said I—'tolerably so.'

'Strange doings down here, I believe!'

'Really, Sir,' I replied, 'I am at a loss to understand your meaning, or what you can want with me—will you be good enough to state your business?'

'I will, Sir. I am the reporter of the ———: we have heard strange accounts at our office of your conduct, and the people where we publish our paper are anxious to know the truth of them. I am come down to examine into these matters myself—to go over the ground myself—you know, Sir, it is the only way; and to report the facts to the public.'

'Well, Sir,' replied I, 'as that is your mission, I wish you every happiness and fine weather. I have no doubt you will meet many who will tell you a great deal which it may suit your views to publish, and you will probably be able to make out a very interesting story. I wish you a good morning.'

'Good morning, Sir,' returned he; and we parted.

In about five minutes after, I heard his step behind me again; and turning round, he once more addressed me, and asked me still more mysteriously for a few moments' private talk. I fell back with him again behind my friends.

'*You don't happen at present to have any money about you, Sir?*' he asked in a confidential manner. 'I have just been at the post office, and to my *great surprise*, I find that the remittances I expected have not come, and you know I can't travel over the country without money.'

'Really, Sir,' I replied, 'your position is no doubt per-

plexing; but in the first place, I have very little money about me, and in the next, you could hardly expect me to lend it to you if I had much.'

'Oh, Sir, that is no doubt very natural in you, but—*you haven't got even five shillings about you at present—have you?*'

'Sir,' said I, 'this is a most extraordinary application upon your part. I have just five shillings about me, neither more nor less; but surely you, the reporter to a public journal, cannot be in want of five shillings!'

'Look at me, Sir,' he replied, assuming at once and in reality an air of the most abject poverty, casting suddenly off his jaunty air, and relaxing every muscle of his frame as he stood before me the picture of hungry want. 'Look at me, Sir—I want food. Do I look like a man who had broken his fast to-day? Not want five shillings? Give me *one* shilling, Sir, to get something to eat, and I will give you my heart-felt blessing.'

I was much shocked: I saw that truth was stamped upon his face.

'Oh, Sir,' said I, 'this really quite alters the case between us. I cannot bear to see a man of your probable education in want of so trifling a sum. Here is the only money I have about me, and if I had more, I assure you it should be yours;' and I handed him the only five shillings in my pocket.

'God bless you, Sir,' he returned, with a look of deep thankfulness; 'you may depend on it I will never forget it.'

He left, and I saw him no more; but in a short time afterwards my attention was called to an article setting forth the vast improvements which had taken place under my 'enlightened superintendence' on Lord Lansdowne's estate in Kerry, and describing it as a Garden of Eden.

I can never think of this little incident without reflecting

what a strange amount of good or evil, usefulness or mischief, truth or falsehood—nay, even the making or the blasting of a man's character in the eyes of a large portion of the world—may be thus placed in the hands of one who was so pressed by want as to be influenced in the whole tone of his remarks—which go forth to thousands on the wings of the daily press—by the gift of a five-shilling piece! By me I can truly say it was given in sheer pity for his hungry and wretched state, but if given with the basest motives, it is possible the effect might in this case have been the same.

It may here be asked what was the cause of all this misery, and all this after-cost upon the estate of a kind-hearted and generous nobleman? I answer at once, *the pernicious system of subdivision and subletting of land.* No one who has not tried it can conceive the difficulty in which an Irish landlord or agent is placed with regard to this matter. I can truly say *its prevention has been the great difficulty of my life as a land agent.* The collection of rent is almost always easy on a well-managed estate; but the prevention of subdivision is almost always difficult. The desire to subdivide is by no means confined to the larger tenants, nor even to those who hold land to the moderate value of 30*l.*, or 20*l.*, or even 10*l.* per annum; but tenants possessed of holdings valued at only 1*l.* or 2*l.* per annum frequently endeavour, openly or by stealth, to subdivide these little plots of land, and erect huts or sheds upon them for their young people to marry and settle in, utterly regardless of the certain poverty which must necessarily await them where there are no other means of support. And yet if any landlord or agent is determined to resist this system, and to evict those who in spite of all remonstrances and entreaties persist in this pernicious course—though the plot of land be scarcely sufficient to feed a goat,

and the hut be of the most degraded class—he is attacked with a virulence and bitterness of hostility which none who do not live in Ireland can imagine; sometimes by the local press, sometimes by local agitators both lay and clerical, who hold him up to public odium and indignation as an exterminator, and sometimes (though not in Kerry) by the blunderbuss or bludgeon of the assassin; so that really it requires no little moral as well as physical courage to face the storm which is certain to be raised against him!

I am convinced that Lord Lansdowne's former agent—an amiable and kind-hearted gentleman, who had presided over the estate for more than thirty years—would have resisted this system if he dared; but he dreaded to meet the storm of abuse which he knew awaited him from so many quarters, if he attempted it. He therefore quietly shut his eyes to the state of things which he must have known was going on, in the vain hope, I presume, of 'making things pleasant' to his noble employer in England; and thus, when the potato suddenly failed, the whole system collapsed, spreading death and misery around.

The extent to which subdivision and subletting to squatters had been carried, may be estimated from the fact, that notwithstanding the vast number—4,600 people—that were sent to America at Lord Lansdowne's expense, off this estate alone, *within a period of three or four years from the commencement of the system;* and although little or no subdivision has taken place since then, yet at this moment the average rent of each farm is only 11*l.* per annum; an average far too small to enable tenants to support and educate their families in tolerable comfort and respectability.

Ever since that terrible period, however, Lord Lansdowne's estate has, in general, advanced rapidly in prosperity. The numerous consolidations which were then

effected have invariably been attended with advantage; and although it is still very far from what one would wish it to be, yet no one who knew the estate before, and who visits it now, can be otherwise than struck with the extraordinary change which has taken place upon it for the better. His lordship did not confine his expenditure to emigration: he entered largely upon the improvement of the dwellings of the people and the better cultivation of the land. And after a period of eighteen years I was enabled during the last session of Parliament to give a statement before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Irish Tenure of Land Bill—of the improvements carried out by Lord Lansdowne on this property, such as I question if many of the most liberal landlords have exceeded on their estates in England.*

* Extract from Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Tenure of Land (Ireland) Bill, (W. Steuart Trench under examination): 'On another estate, situated in the south of Ireland (Marquis of Lansdowne's), the rental of which is about 11,000*l.* per annum, there has been expended, within the last seventeen years, on drainage and land improvement, 8,829*l.*; on buildings and repairs of tenants' houses, 13,393*l.*; on compensation for surrender of tenements, 3,948*l*; on emigration (4,616 persons), 17,059*l.*; and on sundry improvements, not included in the above, 11,129*l.*; making a total, in seventeen years, of 54,358*l.*: average, inclusive of emigration, 3,197*l.*; average, exclusive of emigration, 2,194*l.* The number of new houses built on this estate (by the proprietor) within the above period has been about fifty.

CHAPTER IX.

MARY SHEA.

INCIDENTS of a touching and sometimes of an almost romantic character came frequently before me in my official capacity during the course of those trying years. One of these I particularly remember, and as I had an opportunity of tracing out the tale from the commencement to the end, I will give it a separate chapter.

I have gone through much laborious work during my life, but I never went through any which pressed so hard upon my powers of endurance as the arrangements for the emigration at Kenmare. The tide of emigrants was so enormous, each pressing his individual claim, and terrified lest all the money should be exhausted before his or her name could be entered upon the emigration list, that I was compelled to station several stout men at the door of my office to keep the place clear, or the pressure of the crowd outside would absolutely have burst it in. These strong though kind-hearted porters prevented unnecessary crushing, and having selected those from amongst the applicants who seemed from their appearance least able to wait, they let them in one by one to me. I carefully investigated the case of each ; and having granted or declined the application, as the merits of the case deserved (and at that time I refused very few), they were passed on, their names having been entered for America. The joy depicted on the countenances of those who came out, and to whom immediate

emigration was promised, contrasted with the anxiety of those who were still awaiting the decision of their fate at the entrance door, was one of the most striking incidents of the scene.

I frequently passed eight hours a day at this most disagreeable and laborious work. From the very nature of the case, none came before me except those upon whom want in its severest form had fallen. A similar state of things when these creatures were pressing for admission to the workhouse, had brought many a poor-law guardian, Government official, and many a kind-hearted Irish lady and gentleman to their graves, by violent typhus seizing them in the midst of their anxious duties.

One rule I felt compelled to make, namely, that I would speak to no applicants during the short intervals of my release from business. There was a constant but natural endeavour on the part of the peasantry to waylay me, as it were, in the private grounds of Lansdowne Lodge, thinking they might thus obtain greater time and a more quiet opportunity to state their several claims, and press their title to a share of Lord Lansdowne's bounty in the free emigration which was going forward. So difficult did I find it to prevent this constant invasion of my very few hours of privacy—hours which were almost as essential to my health as breathing to my existence—that I found it necessary to place guards around the premises; and, as the grounds were then wholly unenclosed, and consisted chiefly of wood and underwood, through which shady walks had been cut, I found myself frequently face to face with an applicant for emigration, notwithstanding all the vigilance of my patrols.

I was walking one evening in those p.ivate pleasure grounds, after a day of heavy labour in the office, when I thought I perceived a pair of bright eyes watching me

The spanish beauty

LONGMANS & Co LONDON

"Oh listen to me till I tell you what I have to say, for mine
is a sore sore sorrow

through the leaves of some holly bushes with which the wood abounds. I stopped immediately and asked who was there.

'Oh, indeed your honour, it's only me; and I know it's against the rules of the office to come here. But shure wasn't I waiting at the office door all day, and they wouldn't let me in, because they said I was well able to hold out still, and wasn't nigh so weak as many of the creatures that was there. And that was true enough; but then they didn't know that I had ten long miles to go home before night; and so, as some said your honour was a good man, though some said not, I thought I would just chance it for once, and maybe your honour would find time to speak to a poor desolate orphan like me, even though it is against the rules.'

'The desolate orphan,' who now came forward and exhibited not merely her bright eyes but her full form to my view, was somewhat singular in her appearance. She had but little of the original Celt in her features. Her beauty was purely Spanish, of which I have seen many perfect specimens in Tuosist and around Kenmare: large soft eyes, with beautiful dark downy eyelashes, the mouth well formed, and cheek of classic mould; whilst the figure, perfect in its symmetry, is erect and active, and exhibits a lightness of step and grace of motion which can rarely be attained but by constant practice in walking over the mountains. The form which now stood before me was a beautiful specimen of this perfect Spanish type. She was clean and neat in her person, though her clothes were of the coarsest kind. Her gown, made of the light grey flannel or freize, manufactured in the mountains where she lived, was crossed upon her bosom and extended up to her neck. Her hair, as black as jet, was neatly parted on her forehead, and hung in careless folds down her back. She had neither

shoes nor stockings, and her dress did not come down to within seven or eight inches of her feet. She wore no shawl, which is common in the district, about her neck. She held her head as erect as a startled fawn. Her hands were clasped in an attitude of wild supplication, and the symmetry of her form was enhanced by the unusual addition of a leather strap buckled around her waist, which, though neither new nor ornamental in itself, had the effect of showing off her naturally beautiful figure to the best advantage.

The moment she appeared from behind the holly bush, she commenced her oration. And talking with a volubility and amount of action which it would be impossible to describe, her features became animated, and the blood mounted to her cheeks. In truth, I have rarely seen so beautiful and so natural a girl. I think she knew she was a beauty, and had 'chanced' a little of the success of her visit upon that score, as well as upon my 'goodness;' but there was no vanity or coquetry in her manner—she was perfectly natural and simple, and, as regards the knowledge of her beauty, so intelligent a girl as she was could not possibly look at her reflection in one of her own dark mountain lakes, and not see that she was different from her neighbours.

She had watched my countenance with the quickness of an Irish peasant during the whole time she was speaking; and in fact I felt sure she had prolonged her statement for that sole purpose, in order to form an estimate of her success, or vary her line of advance according as circumstances revealed themselves. I saw this perfectly at the time; but my interest in her vivacious courage was so great, and my admiration of her beauty so impossible to conceal, that she saw in a moment, though I had not yet spoken a word, that she had won her point.

'Ah! well I knew your honour had a good and kind

heart within you,' said she, coming forward with graceful animation and under cover of her well-turned flattery. 'And now maybe I'd never have another opportunity, and oh! just listen to me till I tell you what I have to say, for mine is a sore, sore sorrow.'

In a moment her whole countenance—almost her form, had changed. Her courage—some of which she had evidently derived from her beauty, seemed to have departed. Tears filled her eyes as she looked down upon the ground, and even her form seemed to lose many inches of its height. I could scarcely have thought that the same human being was before me, as she now stood about to tell her tale of sorrow.

'What is your name?' I asked, 'and where do you live?'

'Mary Shea is my name,' said she, 'that is, my maiden name, and indeed for that matter I am not married yet.'

'Married!' I exclaimed, 'why you seem scarcely seventeen years of age.'

'True for you,' replied she, 'you guessed it very nigh, as I'll only be seventeen next Shrove-tide.'

'And what is your case? what do you want me to do?'

'I'll tell your honour that,' replied she, resuming in a moment a portion of her previous animation. 'What I want your honour to do is, to put down Eugene's name in the books, as tenant for the little place I have up in the mountain.'

'And who is Eugene? and how came you to have a little place of your own, and you so young as you are?'

'I'll tell your honour all about it,' she replied: 'the way of it all was this:' and again in a moment her countenance changed, her eyelids drooped, her form seemed to lose its height, and with a little hesitation as to where she should begin, she commenced her tale of woe. 'The way of it all was this; your honour was not here in the "hungry year,"

(a term frequently used amongst the peasantry to describe the famine); but them was terrible times. I was only a little slip of a girl then—and sure for that matter I'm not much more this minute. But my father had a little place up in the mountains, the same as what I was now talking about. Well you see, he was an ould man, and my mother was sickly, and they had no other child but me, and the place was very small, and when the potatoes blackened, sure they had no one but God to look to. "Father," says I, "I fear ye'll die, and mother too, if ye don't get something to ate." "True for ye, child," says father, "but where are we to get it? the great God has rotted the potatoes in the ground, and what other support had we all, and sure the neighbours are as bad off as we are." Mother said nothing: she looked at father and me, she kissed me once or twice, as if to wish me good-bye; and when I got up in the morning, I found her sitting in her clothes beside the fire quite dead and stiff—not a month after the potatoes had blackened.

'Well, ye see we lived far up in the mountains, and no meal or anything could be got there, except what I brought myself—and it was ten long miles from Kenmare. "But still," says I, "I won't let father die if I can help it!" So we had a few hives of honey which the gentlemen liked, because the bees made it all on the heather; and I used to slip over to Kenmare, now and then, with a hive, and bring back a little meal to father—we had no cow, as the place was too small to rear one. And I won't tell your honour a lie when I say that sorra ha'porth we had to live on except just the few hives of honey; and I knew when they were out, and I had no money to buy meal, we might just lie down and die. However, I said nothing to father about this, for I was only a slip of a girl; but I thought it for all that.

'Well, sure enough, after a time the honey was all sold,

and I smothered the last bee I had—though in troth I was sorry to do so, as I had reared them all myself, and I think they knew me, as they never once stung me, though I used to sit close to the hive watching them. However, I knew well it was better for them to die than father, so I had to smother them; and I went down to Kenmare with a sorrowful heart, and got 15*s.* for the hive. Well, with that I fed father and myself for another weary month: and when the meal was out, father says to me—"Mary dear, it's no use striving any longer against the hunger. I can't stand it. I'm weak and faint, and not able to go out to the public works, and I might as well die in the house as on the roads; and now mind, Mary dear, when I die, bury me beside your mother in the garden, and don't be making any noise about it—calling a wake or a funeral, for all has enough to do these hard times for themselves." "Oh father dear, don't talk that way," says I, "I'll just go out and see if I can't get something that will keep the life in ye yet." So father said nothing, but just lay down on the bed, as if to wait till I came home. Well, I had some strength and spirit in me yet. And as Eugene and I had known each other since we were little children, I thought I would just go to him and see if he could help me. But when I went to his house he was far away on the public works. So I had no more heart nor strength to go any farther, and I had enough to do to get home. But oh! sorrow came heavy on me then: for when I called on father as I came in to ask him if God had sent him any food, he did not answer; and when I came to his bed, and put my hand upon his forehead, I found that he was dead and cold, and I was left alone in the world.'

Here the poor girl's voice failed; and, commencing to weep bitterly, she turned her head away. I found the tears

rising in my own eyes too, but endeavouring to turn her thoughts from this sad scene, I said—

'You have mentioned Eugene once or twice—who is Eugene?'

She dried her eyes in a moment; and, resuming the natural vivacity of her manner, she called aloud to some one who was evidently near at hand—

'Eugene! where are you, Eugene? I wouldn't wonder if he was here this minute!'

And, truly enough, he was; for slowly emerging from the same holly bush where I had observed the young damsel's eyes in the first instance, came a tall good-looking youth, clean and fair, with a cheek as smooth and free from beard as a woman's. He was about nineteen or twenty years of age, and as bashful as a youth detected under such circumstances—though she had evidently hid him there herself—could be.

'Don't be afeared, Eugene,' cried the damsel—'don't be afeared. The gentleman isn't angry. Come and spake to him this minute.'—'He is shy, your honour,' said she—turning to me in a conciliatory voice, as if excusing and patronising her lover, over whom she evidently considered she had a great advantage in facility of speech and general knowledge of the world:—'He is shy, and doesn't know how to spake to a gentleman; and I hope you'll excuse him; but he is a good kind boy for all that, and well able to become a tenant for the little place, if you will only put his name in the book.'

'Well but,' I urged, 'if I put his name down in the book, he will be the tenant and not you; and how would that answer your purpose?'

'Oh, sure your honour, it would be all the same; we would get married at once, and we would have the little place between us, as I feel lonesome in it all by myself.'

'How large is the little place?' enquired I.

'Well, for that matter, it is big enough,' she replied; 'but indeed it is not good for much, as it's able to feed nothing but the bees. And, troth, I don't know where they find anything to gather except in autumn, when the blossom comes upon the heather.'

'What is the value of the place?' asked I.

'Well indeed, it is not much. The late agent said it was good value, little cabin and all, for *7s. 6d.* a year, and the rent was never raised since, and we made a few perches of potato-garden near the house.'

'And so you and Eugene really want to marry and set up house upon a place only worth *7s. 6d.* a year cabin, mountain-land, garden, and all?'

'Well indeed, your honour, I don't see what better we could do. You see Eugene and I have known each other a long time now, and all the neighbours knows we loves each other very much—and why wouldn't I love him, poor boy, when it was himself that saved my life.'

'How did he save your life?' I asked.

'Well, you see, I was telling you all about it,' she resumed, 'when you asked for Eugene, and I had to present him to your honour. But shure enough, it was Eugene, and no one else, that saved my life, that night I was telling you of when father died. I found him cold and stiff in the bed when I came home; and I had nothing in the house myself—no meal, nor bread, nor potatoes, nor a ha'porth; so I just sat down on the bedside near him, and—God forgive me!—I prayed that He would take me too; for I was helpless and sorrowful, and weak and down-hearted, with the hunger. And then I began to cry; and I thought of mother, how she had died, and how father was dead, and no one to bury him. "And," thinks I, "if I die too, the cabin will make a decent little grave over us all, and no one will

know anything about it!" So I was crying on, thinking of all these things, and wondering how it all came about, when I heard a footstep at the door, and I guessed at once it was Eugene's. So he never said a word to me at first, but he sat himself down beside me. And after a little, he says—"What is it, Mary dear?" "Oh, Eugene," says I, "mother is dead, and now father is dead: there he is before you, and I'm going to die too, for I'm broken-hearted, and have nothing to eat." "Eat this," says Eugene, and he pulled an elegant loaf out of his pocket—"I guessed ye came up to look for me to-day; and when I came home from the works and mother gave me my supper, I just put it in my pocket as I wasn't hungry myself, and came off with it to you. So eat it, Mary dear; for I couldn't eat it if a basket full of bread was before me!" Well, I knew the poor boy had stinted himself to give it to me; but I was well-nigh gone, so I just gave him a loving look, and says I—"Eugene dear, I know well how it is; but I'll eat it for all that for your sake, and for fear I'd die before your face." And so I did; "And now, Mary," says he, "come home with me, and mother will take care of you for a bit; and in the morning I'll come out myself and bury father for you." And so he did—the brave boy that he is, shy as he looks before your honour now. And we dug the grave between us, and put father into it, just as he was—for we had no coffin—where would we get one that year? and we laid him beside mother. And when the great day comes, sure they'll both rise together as well as if they were in a coffin of gold!'

Again she began to weep; but it was of short continuance this time.

'And now, won't you put Eugene's name in the book? and we'll go live there again, for its hard to keep him away, and he is always pressing me to go with him to the priest.

And we have put a new coat of thatch upon the little cabin, and maybe God would be good to us, and the bees would thrive, and the hungry year may never come on us again.'

It was hard to resist such an appeal; especially when so easy an act would make a young and attached couple happy. But when I reflected upon the prospects in life upon which they were about to marry—nothing but a few acres of worthless heather, the cabin and all the land attached worth only *7s. 6d.* a year, and fit for nothing but to feed bees—I felt that in granting her request, I was only perpetuating the very system which had killed her father and mother; and, if extended now again, could not possibly lead to anything but the utmost want and misery. To think of this noble youth and innocent and lovely maiden—such a handsome loving couple as they were—squatting on this miserable plot of irreclaimable mountain side! I could not bear to think of it, so I resolved, if I could, to save them from so unworthy a fate.

'Well, Mary, I have heard all you have to say, and I would gladly do anything in my power to serve you and Eugene,* but I cannot bear the thought of a handsome girl like you, and a fine manly boy like him, settling down for life on this miserable patch on the side of a barren mountain. I am thinking it would be far better to try your fortune in America together, and go out like the other emigrants, so many of whom were pressing to get their names down to-day.'

Mary was silent for a little. At last she said,

'Well, your honour, I often thought it would be better—sure enough—to try our fortune in America, than to marry

* 'Eugene' is a common christian name amongst the peasantry in that part of the country, probably of Spanish origin.

and settle on that small patch of barren land where my little place is; but I couldn't bear to think of going out on charity as a pauper. I never yet got poor relief from the workhouse; and I wouldn't wish to go to America with the likes of the emigrants your honour is now sending out.'

'I understand your scruples,' I replied, 'so I will propose another plan. What do you think if Eugene were to go out first—just for one year—and see whether the country would suit you and him? Let him return at the end of the year; and if he does not like America, then I will put his name in the books as tenant for your own little place, or probably I shall be able to give you and him a better farm by that time.'

'I would be loth to part with him for a whole long year,' said Mary, looking lovingly upon the bashful Eugene; 'but still I think it might be the best way after all; for no doubt it is a poor place to settle on. But Eugene has no money to go out with, and I have little or none to help him, and he couldn't go without that.'

'He shall not fail for want of funds; I will lend him the money for his voyage. If he return rich, he will repay me; if not, why it can't be helped.'

'Your honour is very good,' replied she, looking mournfully at Eugene; 'but what will I do without him? and where will I go while he is away?'

'You can stay at mother's, dear, while I am away,' broke in Eugene, who seemed suddenly to awake to an energy he had not before exhibited. 'You well know she always loved you as a daughter, and she will care for you for my sake as well as for your own.'

'I believe your honour's right,' said Mary, turning to me; 'let him go and try his fortune for one year; but mind,' she added, as she looked towards the lad, 'mind, Eugene, you

must swear to me on the Book you will come back—rich or poor—I don't care which, within the one year.'

'I will swear it to you freely,' replied Eugene, who seemed suddenly to find his tongue and all his other energies at the prospect of such an opening.

'And will your honour promise, on the word of a gentleman, to give us back the little place, or get us another better one when he returns, if he won't take me out with him again?' asked Mary with an appealing look.

'Indeed I will; I faithfully promise it, if I am alive and here.'

'Well then, let it be so,' said the weeping Mary; 'and now the sooner the better. When will your honour give him the money that he may go at once?'

'To-morrow morning. He shall also have a new suit of clothes, as fast as the tailor can make them, and I have no doubt he will get into immediate employment.'

Mary looked at her intended husband, and at once perceived that a man's energy and courage had suddenly risen within him. He was no longer a sheepish boy, patronised and brought forward by her; and he took upon himself the unaccustomed task of comforting and patronising her.

'Mary dear, don't fret; as sure as the sun is in the Heaven, I'll come back; I know I will, and this will be the last parting we will ever have. The gentleman has advised us for our good. The barren lot on the mountain side is no place for the likes of you and me to settle. I'll go seek my fortune in America; and, please God, I'll surely succeed; and then I'll come back for my own darlin', and take her out along with me. For God's sake, master, let us be quick; for I dar'n't rest, or think of leaving Mary, or maybe I couldn't go out at all.'

Mary threw her arms about Eugene's neck, and—

utterly regardless of my presence—sobbed and wept like a little child. Her patronising air was utterly gone, and she addressed him as a lover who had proved himself worthy of her affections.

'Eugene,' said she, 'I know well I need not fear for your love if you were ten thousand miles away. Ye have proved it too often for me to doubt it for a moment now. Go, and God be with you; but—mind you come back within the year, *whether ye be rich or whether ye be poor*—if rich, ye will be welcome, and if poor, ye will then be doubly welcome to your own darlin' Mary. *Never forget that.*'

She then turned to me, and—holding out her hand as a countess might have done—she continued,

'Thank your honour much for your kindness; I'll never forget it, either in this world or the next.'

In a few days Eugene appeared before me, clad in a new and comfortable suit.

I gave him his passage-money, and a couple of pounds over, that he might be able to go up the country, and look for employment at once. He thanked me in a manly open way and departed.

My time and attention were so much occupied with the onerous duties in which I was then engaged, that though I often thought of Mary and her lover, yet I never had an opportunity of making special enquiries about her; but one day, she sought me again as I was walking in the same grounds; and, coming up to me with a countenance beaming with pleasure, she showed me a letter from Eugene. It was not long, nor what most people would call very interesting; but he told her he was in full employment with a good and kind man—that he had already saved *7l.* out of his earnings, and he hoped, before very long, to come back and claim his prize, and carry his darling Mary off

to a far home he was even then preparing for her. This was about six or seven months after he left, and she had remained sometimes in her 'own little place' as she called it, and sometimes with his mother, ever since.

About five months after the last interview, I was walking alone along the sea-shore at Kenmare, when I was again waylaid by the handsome Spanish beauty; but this time she was accompanied by a young man. She looked grave, though happy, as she walked lovingly by his side, and her patronising ways had altogether departed from her. I looked carefully at the young man. He was tall and strong; his beard was massive, and reached almost to his chest; his face was handsome, but sunburnt and weather-beaten; and his whole appearance was as little like her lover Eugene as it was possible for it to be.

I stood still as the pair approached me, looking intently from one to the other. Mary and the man came quite close up to me, and—as neither of them addressed me—I was the first to speak.

'How is this, Mary?' said I, 'and who is this man who accompanies you? You surely do not mean to say you have cast off Eugene, and taken up with another man?'

Mary leaped nearly a foot from the ground as I said so. 'I knew your honour wouldn't know him!' cried she in a sudden ecstasy of joy. 'Why this is Eugene himself! sure didn't he deceive *me*, when he first came into the cabin, and why would your honour know him! Look at him now, and tell me if he is not grown a real man in earnest. Turn round, Eugene, and show yourself;' and assuming her old patronising way for a moment, she turned him round and round for me to look at and admire, whilst he submitted with a loving tender look of admiration at his bride.

'And so this is indeed Eugene come back,' I exclaimed, 'and such a fine manly-looking fellow too. I hope you have prospered, Eugene, and that you will now take out Mary to a new and happy home far better and richer than her little place on the barren mountain?'

Eugene was about to reply, when Mary leaped up, and caught him round the neck with her arms.

'Oh, Eugene!' cried she—almost in hysterics between joy and anxiety—'take me away with you soon, oh take me away, we cannot go too soon to please me!' Then—turning rapidly to me—she said, in a joyous and altered voice,

'He has got a fine place of his own now, and twenty acres of good land, and a grand wooden house, in which he says I can live as comfortable as any lady. Oh, Eugene darling,' cried she, turning to him again, 'take me away—take me away, and let us go to our new home, and never know sorrow or hunger more!'

She burst into tears, and clinging to his neck kissed him over and over again, till he gently took her in his arms, and placed her sitting—still sobbing like a child—on a bank of grass close by.

'Sir,' said he, 'I have to thank you for your kindness. I have brought back with me the money you lent me, and am now ready to repay you. I have a neat place to bring Mary to, and all reasonable comforts for her. I could have made it better, had I waited another year; but I promised in your presence not to let more than one year pass without returning—whether I came rich or poor. I have come back according to my promise. If not rich, at least with enough to give her plenty to eat, and a warm comfortable home; and I hope soon to make it better. To-morrow we go to Cork: we are to be married there. The next day we sail for the West. May God bless you,

Sir! I will never forget your kindness.' And he placed his passage-money in my hand.

Mary sat listening while he spoke, sobbing and crying all the while. He lifted her gently up. She seized my hand and kissed it, covering it with her tears. Then suddenly smiling, whilst the large drops trembled in her eyes, she gave me one grateful and happy look, and left the sea-shore with her lover.

CHAPTER X.

THE SEAL HUNT.

THERE are few places the climate of which is more delightful than that of Kenmare in summer, or for about eight months in the year. It is seldom cold in that region even in winter; but during the months of August, September, and October there is a balmy softness combined with freshness in the atmosphere which I have never felt in any other part of Great Britain. The warm Gulf-stream, which runs across the Atlantic, strikes full upon the Bay of Kenmare, and as this is guarded by lofty mountains at the entrance, about twenty-six miles from the upper end of the bay, the moist and rain-charged clouds, striking these guardian giants, are arrested and converted into rain, ere they float inland from the sea.

These natural features have a strong tendency to render the district immediately around Kenmare more free from rain than it otherwise would be if exposed to the first action of the clouds from the Atlantic. And many a time I have seen shower after shower breaking on the distant hills at the mouth of the bay, whilst all is sunshine at Kenmare. But though the mountains arrest the clouds and showers, they do not hinder the free access of the soft breezes which find their way up the long valley and the narrow neck of sea: and I know of nothing more delightful than pushing off in a skiff upon the bay on a summer's

evening and enjoying the freshness of the delicious air after a day of fagging business.

I fear it was our practice to carry our love for boating a little too far upon these charming waters, and to run risks which were anything but prudent, merely for the pleasure of adventure and the novelty of the scenes which every aspect of the sea produces. My son, Townsend Trench, now Lord Lansdowne's agent at Kenmare, was very fond of boat-building, and contrived a sea-going skiff which has been much admired, and many similar to which have since been built for those residing on the coast. He had long contemplated a trip in his skiff around the wild headlands of Derrynane and Lamb Head to Valentia. One could hardly undertake anything more dangerous, but he fancied that his skiff could accomplish it, and I plainly saw that he had made up his mind to the experiment.

I confess, however, I was somewhat startled one morning, when away from Kenmare, by receiving from him the following letter, which, as it affords a full description of his voyage, I give in his own words.

'KENMARE, *April* 1856.

'MY DEAR FATHER.—I have just successfully accomplished my long-cherished hope of running round to Valentia in *the skiff*.* The weather being settled, with a steady south-east wind, I left Kenmare the day before yesterday at half-past two in the afternoon. Bury and Thade Downing accompanied me.† We carried full sail, and as the breeze freshened we ran with our gunwale to the water's edge all the way to Lamb Head, intending

* The sea-going skiff in which this voyage was made was 25 feet long, 4 feet width of beam, and 8 inches deep amidships, drawing about 4 inches of water. The bow, which is very hollow-shaped, as well as the stern, is slightly turned up or raised; there is also a 4-inch combing round, where the party sit. Two men could carry the boat.

† Two active boatmen.

to sleep at Lord Dunraven's cottage at Derrynane, and proceed to Waterville next morning. The sea, however, was so smooth, and the wind so fair and the aneroid so high, that Bury proposed we should go on and sleep at Valentia!

'It was now eight o'clock in the evening, and we calculated on reaching Valentia about an hour before midnight. Of course it was no joke to venture such a run as that across Ballinskelligs Bay and round "Bolus Head" *at night.* However, we reckoned that if we could live by day, we could live by night, and the nights just now being usually calmer than the days, we resolved to "chance it," and in a few minutes we were flying along with all sails set, at the rate of seven miles an hour—Bolus Head right before us, and Derrynane behind us. Thus in about an hour we crossed Ballinskelligs Bay, that most dangerous of all dangerous places, the sea still curiously flat, working a little as if it intended mischief, but the breeze perfection.

'At Bolus Head of course our greatest danger began. It was now nearly dark, but the crescent moon was up. My two boatmen did not seem at all to me to realise the danger. However, I know well I never can describe to you half the charms of that delightful run. We had tolerable light to steer by, except when we went down into the troughs of the sea, and then it was sometimes hard to discern between the hill which stood beside us, and the waves which seemed like mountains.

'Leaving Bolus Head, we scudded on at a clipping pace, and the skiff yielded so much to the breeze that Bury said we must reef the mainsail. I said not, that we would carry on whilst we could, and then take it down altogether. About this time we ran over some very foul ground just off Bolus, and the sea every now and then gave a vast "hoist" under us that was really nothing short of terrific.

'Puffin Island soon came in view. We held a short consultation, and decided to run inside it—that is, right through the Puffin Sound! We reached it I think about 10 P.M., and now the sea became rougher, and began to tumble us about fearfully, which was very serious, running at the pace we were going before the wind. So we took down the mainsail, running still under the mizen, and with two oars rowing. Nearer and nearer we came on to the Sound, and the awful roar of the Atlantic swell was magnificent. We saw nothing but a sheet of foam between two gloomy cliffs. But it is needless to say that by this time return was impossible—ahead we must go.

'"Now, Sir, keep the island side for your life!" shouted Bury. And immediately we found ourselves between two dark masses of mountain, with roaring crested swells on the left, and on the right a terrible breaker off some rocks close to the shore.

'At this moment a dark canoe,* with six men in her, glided out of the gloom like a phantom, and passed us.

'"Where are you from?" cried they.

'"Kenmare," was our brief reply.

'"A dangerous craft for such a sea as this."

'"Yes, good night!" and we shot past them like an arrow.

'The Puffin Sound looked little else than a mass of foam and breakers. I kneeled up in the boat to look ahead, but could see no way through. So I instantly put the helm about to try and catch our phantom friends, and perhaps get an escort through the pass. But they had disappeared in the gloom, and no calls could be heard ten yards off in the midst of the roar around us. So I prayed

* The canoe of that district is made of canvas, painted black, and stretched on light timber ribs. It floats, in a marvellous manner, on the top of the roughest waves.

to God for guidance, and went straight at the easiest and smoothest-looking spot we could see. I never can forget the power and peace of knowing Christ as my Saviour at such a time as this. It removed all fear of death.

'We found the Sound one sheet of white foam, but *no breakers* in the middle of it. In a few moments we were through, and once more scudding like mad before the wind, the sea being comparatively smooth, as the wind was partly off the shore. During the whole of this critical period, and indeed throughout almost the whole night, one man was continually baling to keep the little craft from filling with water, as she dashed on her way through the sea.

'We soon sighted Bray Head, that is Valentia! The strain of anxiety and work—having run over fifty miles in a state of tension of both mind and body—was now beginning to tell on us. Still we were, thank God, fresh and game. Shortly afterwards we reached Portmagee Harbour, and turning in from the Atlantic, we glided suddenly into a smooth calm channel. I cannot describe the effect this marvellous change had upon us. In another hour we had our boat on Valentia Strand, after having run between fifty and sixty miles in nine hours and forty minutes.

'We roused up the hotel folk, who did not know what to make of us. We were all drenched to the skin; but we got a good fire in the kitchen, and some hot tea. The men slept on the kitchen table, and I got a kind of bed, in which I slept soundly. Next morning having visited one or two friends, we turned towards home. But a stiff sea turn having set in, I resolved not to venture round the headlands. So I ran the skiff ashore near a road, and having hired a cart, I got her and her traps on it, and started across the hills for Ballinskelligs. The horse was young, and never before having had such a load behind him,

became frightened and ran away, skiff and all, up the hill. The driver, however, held on, but, breathless and frightened, he declared he would not try it again. We said he must. But just as the dispute was rising high, we observed an old horse quietly grazing on the road-side. So we turned out the young one into the old horse's place, put the old one into the shafts where the young one had been, and away we went once more, and got safely to Waterville late that evening, skiff and all. Next day I launched the skiff again at Westcove, and reached Kenmare early this evening.

'Such has been our most delightful adventure. I anticipate your rebuke for such monstrous rashness, but really the chance was too attractive to resist. I may never again get such a pet day, and, thank God, the most perfect success attended us throughout. After all, I half suspect that your chief rebuke will be, that I have made the trip without you!

'Your affectionate son,

'J. TOWNSEND TRENCH.

'W. Steuart Trench, Esq.'

I have given the above letter *in extenso*, as showing the wild scenes and many charms which may be amply enjoyed at Kenmare.

The Bay of Ballinskelligs is well-known to fishermen, not only for its abundance of fish, but also as a deceitful and dangerous harbour. I remember on one occasion taking round a small 'hooker' or fishing smack from Kenmare, and making a trial of the celebrated trawling ground in the bay. I can truly say that *in one 'scrape'* we almost filled the little hooker with fish! We took sixty-two pairs of soles, four turbots, I don't recollect how many scores of plaice—but I think at least eight or ten—sixty-three of the largest and finest crabs I ever saw, and a quantity of

skaite and other waste fish. The bank is still there, alive with fish as ever. Some few adventurers now and then take a haul; but as there is no good shelter from storms in Ballinskelligs, should it come on to blow, which, some way or another, generally happens, the fish have it all their own way in those regions, and devour each other at their leisure. I found upwards of twenty small fish of various kinds in the inside of one skaite which I opened.

But interesting as all this may be to those who love such scenes, it is nothing to the excitement of seal hunting, if any be adventurous enough to enter upon that wildest of wild sports of Ireland. Having accompanied an expedition against the seals myself, I will endeavour to describe it in detail.

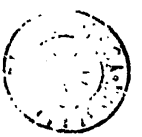
In one of the most remote and unfrequented spots in Ireland, amongst the crags and rocks near Derrynane Abbey, long celebrated as the seat of Daniel O'Connell 'the liberator,' there is a strange and curious cave. It lies nearly opposite to Scarriff Island, and is protected by a cordon of rocks which rise up out of the sea as if to guard its mouth. But the great peculiarity of it is, that the interior of the cave is only accessible for an hour or two during spring tides, and as these only happen periodically once a fortnight, or every month at full moon, the cave's mouth may be considered as practically closed to mankind. But though closed to men, it is at all times open to the seals, and these remarkable animals have found it a most secure retreat; and when weary of fishing or amusing themselves sporting in the Atlantic, they retire to this cavern in security, and make it their resting place at night.

To attack these seals in their own cave was the object of the expedition. This required much care, and to attempt it was a service of some danger. But we heard that it had twice been attempted before, and once with success. On

the first occasion the native who had agreed to accompany us, had gone into the cave with his brother. But the seals came down on them in force in a narrow part of the passage and got entangled in his brother's legs, who lost his nerve, and falling backward on one of the beasts was seized by him and dragged into the water, whence he was rescued by his companion with the loss of a considerable piece of the flesh of his leg. We resolved, nevertheless, to make the trial.

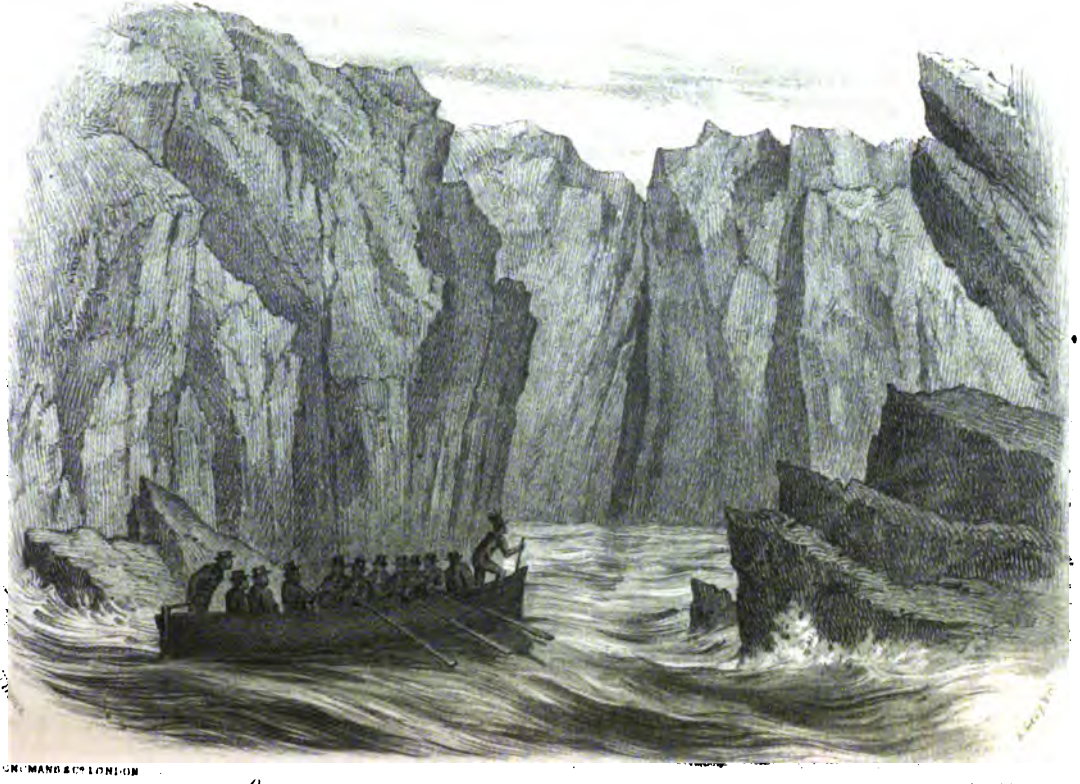
The necessary conditions were as follow:—a calm sea, tolerably warm weather, a full moon, and of course the high spring tides and consequent low strand which accompanies the full moon. Without calm weather no power could get a boat into or even near the cave, as the swell of the Atlantic would inevitably dash it on the rocks. The high strand of the spring tide is necessary lest the entrance to the cave should be covered with water as it is at all other times; and as no man could dive into its unmitigated darkness and live, the spring tide must be waited for to reveal its mouth and render its inner caverns accessible. Warm weather is also an almost necessary condition, as the length of space necessary for the seal-hunter to swim is so considerable, that he might otherwise become numb with cold at the very moment when all his energies and strength would be required.

All these conditions appeared to be fulfilled during our stay at Waterville in September 1856. My son and I had taken up our abode at 'Tom Danahey's,' a little road-side inn well known to all fishermen at Waterville. Tom Danahey has his own way of doing business; his establishment is not showy, I admit, and cannot compare in appearance with the 'Lake Hotel,' which has recently been built in the locality. But, some way or other, Tom generally manages to have his rooms pretty full in the season,



Derrynane Cave

PLATE 14



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Our passage against the breakers was a dangerous one

and whether it is that he understands how to cook the delicious white trout which his customers catch, and the curdy salmon fresh from the river, with the 'sea louse' still clinging to its sides, more delicately than they can manage at the Lake Hotel, I know not; but this I can vouch, that Tom will do his best for his company, and Tom's best is sufficiently good for any man fond of true sport, and who is prepared to rough it a little in trying his luck at the well-known salmon fishing in Waterville.

Tom Danahey is also celebrated for his port. Where he gets it I never could make out, and I believe nobody but he knows; it is a little secret which he likes to keep to himself. But if anyone wishes for a good glass of port wine, well suited to the cultivated taste of the English or Irish gentleman, he may calculate on finding it at Tom's simple little wayside inn.

As I stated before, all necessary conditions for the seal hunt appeared to be fulfilled whilst staying a few years ago at Tom Danahey's with my son, and we resolved upon an attack on the seals. Mr. Clementi—a gentleman residing in that neighbourhood, and who had explored the cave once before with success, having killed a magnificent seal there—kindly offered us his escort; and having secured the services of the guide, who had first discovered this abode of the seals by observing them swimming towards it in the evening, our party was complete. We hired a good strong fishing boat manned with ten oarsmen, and commanded by a shrewd old 'captain,' as he was called by the crew, who was well acquainted with every rock and shoal between Ballinskelligs and Derrynane.

Our equipments were not numerous. My son and Mr. Clementi, both of them good swimmers, had prepared formidable clubs, which of course floated, and which they towed with them when in the water by a string which they

held in their teeth, so as not to impede their swimming. In the bands of their low-crowned hats they had each a long pliable sort of candle, made of a large double-plaited wick, dipped repeatedly in tallow, which stuck up in a strange way from their hats resembling a broken eagle's feather. Inside their hats they had a supply of lucifer matches, lest by any chance the candle should be extinguished. Their dress consisted of two pairs of woollen stockings each, to save their feet from injury on the rocks. The guide wore a waistcoat on his body—nothing else. In his hat was the same strange-looking candle, and he had besides a quantity of chips of split bog-wood stuck round its sides, which, in the moonlight, gave him the appearance of an American Indian chief!

I took nothing with me but my ordinary clothes and a swimming belt, as I did not feel equal to such an adventure as that now projected; but should occasion require it, I was prepared to go in and render any necessary assistance. The distance from Waterville round Ballinskelligs Bay to the scene of action near Scarriff Island, is not less than eight or ten miles. Little more than an hour brought us round the headlands and near to the outside of the rocky cordon.

Hitherto I had been steersman, but now the old 'captain' of the seine boat came to the stern, and without speaking a word pushed me quietly aside, as if I were a log of wood, took the helm from my hand, and giving one or two quick orders to the men in Irish, we found ourselves suddenly amongst the breakers, and so close to the rocks with their dark shadows overhanging, that the men were compelled to row with shortened oars.

'Mind what you are about, captain!' shouted Clementi.

'Never fear, Sir,' replied the old man in his quiet steady voice. He stood firmly in the boat with an expression of

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The Guide wore a waistcoat on his body.

The old captain of the same boat came to the stern.

intense watchfulness, courage, and confidence in himself. Though an old and poor and small man, so complete was his influence not only over the men but over ourselves, that I think had he dashed us straight at a rock I should have looked with confidence to a safe result.

Our passage amongst the breakers was a dangerous one. Though the sea appeared comparatively calm outside, yet amidst the rocks a considerable swell was apparent. Sometimes we rowed with shortened oars, the rocks jutting out so near that the men had scarcely room to pull. Sometimes a sudden cry from the captain of 'Back water, boys! back water for your lives!' made us aware that we were proceeding at imminent risk. And when, at last, after poising the boat for a few minutes on the top of each swell as it rolled on, the captain wildly shouted, 'Now boys, pull, pull for your lives!' I found he had been calmly waiting for a wave of sufficient volume, on the swelling top of which we might actually leap the cordon of rocks which surrounded the mouth of the cave. In a moment we were inside the rocky barrier, the immediate danger was past, and we found ourselves within the smooth amphitheatre in which the mouth of the cave is situated. The entrance is difficult to find. It stands right opposite to Scarriff Island. A bold crew, however, commanded by an experienced captain, can at any time make it out.

We now rowed on, preserving the most perfect silence, lest the seals should be disturbed. The hunters stripped for work, and by degrees we approached the cave. The entrance is very narrow, and the split on the outside of the rock which forms it appears to be immensely high; but the spot was so gloomy, and we came so suddenly under its shadow, that I could not measure its proportions. No one spoke aloud, but the guide came stealthily up, and asked me for a knife. I lent him one, and he put it into his waistcoat pocket.

The time of action had now arrived; my son and Clementi struck each a light, and applying it to the strange candles in their hats, a bright flame blazed forth, which set off the dark shadows of the cave in formidable contrast. Both now fixed their hats firmly on their heads, looked carefully to their clubs, and slipped up quietly to the bow of the boat. In a few moments we had entered the cave, and pushing the boat forward with our hands (the sides of the rocks being so close that we could not use the oars), we advanced some thirty yards into the dark cavity. I now lit a match, and applying it to a torch made of split pieces of bog-wood tied tightly together and saturated with tar and turpentine, a complete illumination of the cave was the result. We soon came to a stop, the boat having no room to proceed farther within the narrow creek. In a moment—silently, like a cormorant gliding from a rock—down dropped the guide from the bow of the boat into the water. He was instantly followed by my son and Clementi, all of them as silent as death, and away the three hunters swam, right up into the darkness of the cave.

To us who remained in the boat the whole scene had the strangest effect, and raised feelings within us of the most intense interest and excitement. Instantly, almost before we could realise the fact, the three adventurers were seen swimming rapidly into the depths of the narrow cavity, the water many fathoms deep, and so clear that we could see every stroke of their limbs by the torchlight, whilst the candles in their hats gave a lurid and most unnatural effect to the scene. And when we remembered that they were bent on attacking the formidable seal in his own element, and in his own chosen home, it may well be imagined that feelings of no ordinary anxiety prevailed over our minds.

'My God!' briefly exclaimed one of the men as he saw

Away the three hunters swam rapid up into the darkness of the cave.

The cormorant.

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A large cormorant dashed at the swimmers with open mouth.

the three swimmers drop silently and suddenly into the sea. It was the only exclamation which escaped the lips of any of us; but the men rushed so violently to the bow of the boat to watch them, that I had to force them back with my torch. On they swam, the three lights rapidly diminishing as they penetrated deeper and deeper in, until at length they appeared like little twinkling stars glowing in a canopy of jet.

I confess I felt nervous and excited to a degree I have rarely felt before. My son was one of the three; and the strangeness of the whole scene, the gradual disappearance of the lights, the darkness rendered visible by the blazing torches, and the knowledge that if disabled by any accident, it would be almost impossible they could return alive from a contest with the seals, produced feelings of undefined apprehension which it is difficult to describe.

At length we heard a strange sharp cry, and a curious flapping noise, whilst we could plainly see the water splashed violently about the distant lights. We were much alarmed, and could not conceive the cause, but we afterwards ascertained it had been occasioned by an absurd adventure. A large cormorant, seeing the swimmers approach in this unusual fashion, had dashed at them with extended wings and open beak, and seized my son first by the cheek and afterwards by his bare arm. He caught the bird by the neck and dragging it under water, cast it behind him. No sooner had he let it go than it dashed still under water at Clementi, who was close behind him, and caught him by the foot. He, being ignorant of the attack the bird had made upon my son, and finding himself caught beneath by some unseen animal, naturally thought that a seal had laid hold of him, and uttered a sharp cry! The cormorant, however, soon let him go, and, seeing that the

invaders were passing on and that no evil was intended to her brood, returned to her place of ambush.

On the adventurers swam, deeper and deeper into the cave; at times the lights were scarcely visible to us—sometimes only one appeared, and sometimes they disappeared altogether. Again we could see them rise high in the chasm as the bearers scrambled over rocks in their way, and down they sank again as they plunged into the water, until at last they reached a part of the cave where a great rock projects down like an inverted cone from above, and chokes up the entire mouth of the cave, except a small opening of about eighteen inches wide by two feet high which is exposed at low-water spring tides. Through this narrow gate they passed, and we saw them no more for a while.

But they soon reached the bed of the shelving beach where the seals had made their home. We could not now see even a twinkle of the lights, and all was perfectly silent for a space of five or six minutes. Our anxiety increased in intensity.

I knew that my son was deep in the recesses of the cave, and in the act of attacking the seals. At last we heard a distant shout, which I fancied was his voice; and disabled as I was by a recently sprained knee, I was just going to fasten on a swimming belt, and place a lighted torch in my hat, that I might make my way into the cave and render what assistance I could, when I heard another shout, and again another, repeated in a cheery tone. 'All right!' exclaimed the boatmen. 'Stay where you are, Sir: they surely have one now!' We all sat silent as the grave, and in ten minutes more we could again perceive the distant twinkle of the lights: nearer and nearer they approached, until at last we could plainly discern the swimmers.

We had brought a blue-light with us; and anxious to

cheer them and show them where we were, I struck it against a rock; it instantly ignited, and to the amazement of all in the boat, the scene became as light as day in a moment, only tinged with the lurid colour of the blue-light. Clementi was the first to arrive, and we hauled him into the boat, his teeth chattering with cold. Then came my son, his club broken in his hand. The light in his hat was out, and he appeared to be much exhausted. We got him up also, with some difficulty, into the boat, where he sat for a time trembling with excitement and cold. Behind him about fifty yards distant came the wild Indian chief. He swam slowly but steadily along, towing by a cord behind him *a dead seal!* The men gave a ringing cheer of delight, as the guide and his seal were lifted in triumph into the boat.

'Who killed him?' said I in a low voice to my son.

'I did,' returned he in a tone equally low. This was all that passed between us.

The Indian chief was in great delight; he laughed and talked and chattered Irish, and dashed about the boat, rushing from time to time at my son, and almost upsetting him by the encouraging blows he dealt him on the back. And in less than two minutes every oarsman in the boat was thoroughly acquainted by our loquacious guide with all that had passed in the cave.

The swimmers now dried themselves as well as they could, and put on their clothes and great coats. They had had a long swim. The cave into which they had ventured could not have penetrated less than two hundred yards under the land. The ocean swell was difficult to manage; and as they neared the shelving beach, it dashed them against the rocks and stones. The passage though long was very narrow, scarcely ten feet wide; so narrow that had the seals rushed down in a body to the sea from their resting-place, the conflict might have been most serious. It

appears, however, that our party had arrived too early. 'The seals had not come home from fishing'—as our guide expressed it; only one was found in the cave, and that met its fate from my son's club. Down the beast came shuffling along close beside where he was standing; and so terrible was the blow he dealt it as it passed, that it fell quite dead at his feet, the skull shattered like an eggshell, and the club broken across in his hand. Had several seals happened to be 'at home,' the encounter might have been most formidable.

There has been no attempt to interrupt the resting-place of the seals since the attack I have described in September 1856. They have ever since enjoyed—and are likely still to enjoy—their wild solitudes in the deep dark cavern of Derrynane unmolested. But should any adventurous sportsman, on reading these pages, be inclined for an expedition against these sea-girt animals, I doubt not some hardy fisherman of the coast will guide him, as they did us, to this most remarkable cave; and, for aught I know, the Indian chief may still be alive and well, and if so I doubt not he will be most willing to lead them in the wild pursuit.

The clear bright rays of the blue-light discovered the strangest variety of birds, who had nestled high upon the rocky ledges to roost. Some shrank back into the crevices of the rocks almost paralyzed with terror at the strange light which had so suddenly penetrated the cave; others peered down in wonder at the unusual scene in the boat. And right under the very bow of the boat, swam the still infuriated cormorant—no quailing with her, notwithstanding our apparent superiority; she seemed to have no idea of fear. There she stayed, swimming about, ducking her head, and challenging us in the most defiant manner, by every gesture she could exhibit, to come down and fight

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So terrible was the blow he dealt the Seal that the beast fell dead at his feet. the skull shattered like an eggshell.

her fairly in her own element. She seemed so determined upon battle, that one of the men was about to strike her upon the head with an oar, but I forbad him. I could not allow the gallant little challenger to be injured.

Having pushed the boat backwards from out of the cave into the open sea, we found the tide had risen considerably, and the breakers were no longer formidable—the cordon of rocks being now well covered with water; we flung the still blazing torches and the blue-light into the water, and turned our boat towards home. The seal lay dead in the bottom of the vessel, his skull crunched and broken. Beside him lay the broken club. The excitement was passed, and all save the rowers were silent. These latter kept up a continual chatter in Irish with the Indian chief, rowing vigorously all the while, and after an hour's hard pulling we arrived safely at Tom Danahey's again, having been only three hours and a half absent. Some warm tea and a little hot punch put us all into famous spirits. The seal hunt was over: a seal had been bagged; the danger was past; and we all went in high heart to bed.

It is not necessary to go to Africa to obtain that excitement in sport which is now so greedily sought. It may be obtained much nearer home in the wild caves of Derrynane. It is but right, however, to warn anyone who may be induced to engage in an adventure such as I have described above, that should the seals come down upon him suddenly as he is struggling out of the water, and in a narrow pass where he cannot jump out of the way, he will run a serious risk of having his bones crunched like a nut.*

* The body of a dead seal is generally worth from 40*s.* to 50*s.*, and when boiled down, makes oil of a superior quality.

CHAPTER XI.

JOE McKEY.

IN the year 1851 I received a letter from my relative the Rev. Richard Chenevix Trench, then rector of Itchenstoke in Hampshire, and now Archbishop of Dublin, to say that the Marchioness of Bath had requested him to offer me the agency of Lord Bath's estate in the county Monaghan. After some enquiry and correspondence, I wrote to say that I should be happy to undertake it, on certain conditions and under certain arrangements. These having been all agreed to, I left Kenmare for Longleat, where I remained a few days with Lady Bath. Lord Bath was then a minor, travelling with a tutor abroad.

It is unnecessary here to say more, than that I made it one special condition—heartily acquiesced in by Lady Bath —that I should not be required to eject any tenant off the estate without being at liberty to provide for him by emigration or otherwise, at the landlord's expense; and thus that no one should be turned out in misery on the roadside or into the poor-house, without at least the offer being made him of providing for himself and family by free emigration to America.

On Lord Bath's estate the tenants had been allowed to fall into heavy arrears, so that not less than 30,000*l.* was due upon the estate when I undertook its management. Many of the tenants had not paid any rent whatever for periods varying from two to six years.

My first step on coming to Carrickmacross—a locality with which my previous experience on Mr. Shirley's estate had made me well acquainted—was to offer free emigration, at the expense of the landlord, to any tenant who chose to accept it, and to his immediate family, provided he would surrender his land; giving him at the same time his stock and crop and all that he had or could make money of, and forgiving him all rent and arrears—no matter how much he owed. I was aware that in making this proposal it would not be accepted by any except those who could not pay; and from those, all I required on the landlord's part was, the bare worn-out land.

A large number of the utterly insolvent availed themselves of this proposal—resigned their land, and took shipping forthwith for America; but liberal as the offer was, it provoked the bitter hostility of the most reckless and daring of the tenantry. These at last saw that they must now be forced to come to terms; they must settle their accounts or emigrate. Hitherto they had declined to do either. They had paid no rent, and yet they held possession of their land. This they plainly saw could now go on no longer.

The plan acted most advantageously over the property. Large sums were paid in by those who found themselves able to do so, and the paupers prepared for emigration. A few, however, stood out, and would neither emigrate nor pay; and one man, named Traynor, plainly told me 'that he had held the land for six years without paying any rent, that it was worth fighting for, and "by the powers" he would never pay while he could still hold out against the law!' This man afterwards narrowly escaped being hanged for conspiracy to murder Patrick MacMahon, one of my bailiffs. He was arrested and put into gaol, climbed over a high prison wall, and ran for it, got himself packed amongst a hamper

of eggs, slipped over thus to Liverpool, and was never heard of afterwards.

Amongst the most obstinate and rebellious of this portion of the tenantry was a man named Joe McKey. He called himself a Presbyterian. He held a considerable farm in a wild district bordering on the mountainous part of the county of Armagh; and he had paid no rent for the past five years. Frequent 'latitats' and other legal missiles had been hurled at him, but no one ventured to arrest him. He was a man reputed to be of singular courage and daring, able, active, and desperate; and he prided himself on having defied any man in Ireland to take him prisoner.

I was informed that this man was the acknowledged leader of all the recusants over a large district of the estate, that many had bound themselves to act as he did; and, in short, unless Joe McKey were put down or overcome, that district would hold out in defiance of both law and order.

My first step, accordingly, was to issue a warrant against him for debt, and to offer 50*l.* to any man who would arrest him. But my surprise was considerable to hear that no one could be found who would undertake a mission so dangerous; and a bailiff to whom I especially remarked upon the large premium for the arrest of one man replied, 'Thank your honour; 50*l.* is very good, and not to be earned every day; but *life is sweet!*' and nothing I could say would induce him to attempt it. The report, whether true or not, was, that he always went about with a loaded horse-pistol in his breast, that many people had seen the brass handle sticking out of the pocket of his coat, and that he had sworn solemnly to put the contents of the pistol into the body of any bailiff who should ever attempt to take him.

Such was the leader with whom I had now to deal. I

had only been about six months in office; and I was plainly, but reluctantly, told by the head bailiff and clerk, 'That whilst Joe M'Key held sway, no good could be got of a large portion of the northern end of the estate.'

I confess I was much puzzled; it would have taken a year or more to eject him by the ordinary notice to quit, and resistance to authority was beginning to spread over the district. I determined accordingly to go myself and at least take the measure of this redoubted hero, and see if he was as formidable as he was reputed to be. I cannot say that I had any specific plan in view; but I wished to see him and speak to him, and be guided afterwards by circumstances as they might arise. Nothing was then further from my intention than to arrest him myself.

The country at this time was very seriously disturbed. Several murders had been committed in that immediate vicinity bordering on the county of Armagh; and the people had become excited, and were in a very dangerous temper. I therefore carefully loaded a brace of double-barrelled pistols on which I could thoroughly depend; and having determined to go to the man's abode alone, but wholly unexpected, I took with me a tracing of the estate map to show me the way to his house, without the necessity of making any enquiries along the road. And mounting my horse, I started from Carrickmacross at ten o'clock in the morning, telling no one of my destination.

M'Key's residence was about seven miles from Carrickmacross. I rode quickly to prevent the possibility of my intention being suspected or anticipated, and I arrived at the house of course wholly without notice. It had once been respectable, but had fallen much into decay. The hall door stood in the centre of the building with a long narrow window on either side. I knocked at once, and after a short interval, a man dressed only in his shirt and

Drawn by J. T. Smith

A Gray Tait

LONGMANS & Co LONDON

Forster & Co Lith Dublin

"The house had once been respectable but had fallen much into decay"

trowsers came to the narrow window and asked what I wanted.

'I want to get in,' said I.

'You can't get in here,' he replied curtly, and with a clear determined voice.

I at once suspected that this was the man I sought, and I asked him immediately,

'Are you Joe McKey?'

'And what if I am?' said he boldly.

'Nothing,' I replied, 'but that I want to speak to you, and should be obliged if you would let me in.'

'Speak to me as you are—you can't get in here.'

'Do you know who I am?' I asked.

'No,' said he, 'nor I don't care a rap.'

'I am Mr. Trench.'

'Oh!' returned he, 'I beg your pardon, Sir—I did not know it was you; but I am sorry to say I can't possibly let you in.'

It was something, I thought, to have made him change his tone—so I immediately changed mine.

'I heard that you were a stout and daring fellow, and that you feared no man when alone. I want to speak to you, so I came alone, and I suppose you will let me in.'

He looked at me suspiciously for a few moments, cast an eye round to see if there was a bailiff concealed, seemed very undecided in his mind, but at length shook his head and said again, 'I am sorry to refuse you, Sir, but I can't possibly let you in.'

I was annoyed; and partly forgetting myself for a moment, I replied,

'I believe you are but a coward after all. I told you I was alone. I pledge you my word of honour no one is with me, or near me, nor knows that I am here. I came

to speak to you and to see you entirely alone—are you afraid of one man?'

He did not hesitate now; but, going to the door, unbarred and unbolted it, and throwing it wide open with an air of offended dignity, he said,

'Walk in, Sir, walk in, if *that's* the way you talk—walk in and welcome; you shall never say *I* hindered you;' and he strode on before me into the kitchen or living room, pushing that door also as wide as it could be opened.

I gave my horse to a boy to hold, who came out at the same moment, and I followed my conductor in. I felt very much as if I was walking into a lion's den; but there was no help for it now, so I determined to make the best of it.

The room into which he led me presented rather a singular scene. The furniture was of the meanest class; but sitting at the fire were two men—each between thirty and forty years of age—able, athletic fellows, and they did not seem to welcome me. They also were in their shirts and trowsers, and their eyes looked somewhat bleared and inflamed; but they were all perfectly sober. They stood up, however, as I entered, made a slight obeisance, and stood quietly in their places. Near them was a young woman, neat in her dress, and very good-looking, though perhaps somewhat careworn, and apparently about twenty-three years of age. She seemed frightened and uneasy, not at me—whom she scarcely noticed—but at M'Key, off whom she never for a moment took her eyes. Her gaze was so intense upon him, that I turned round from the others whom I was going to address, and sitting down to show that I intended no personal violence, I faced M'Key himself. A bright fire was burning, and the rays of the morning sun, which made their way through a narrow window, threw a light over his entire frame. It was not a common one,

The Kitchen.

LONGMAN & C.° LONDON

Penrose & C.° 104 Dublin

"Who are these men" said I, and what are they doing here" "We were just to queen" said one of the men "would you honor (the) to taste some"

His hair and whiskers were black, and a dark stubble was on his chin and upper lip, as of a beard unshaven for a day or two. His neck was bare, and his shirt sleeves were tucked up above his elbows, revealing an arm like a knotted rope. His trowsers were fastened by a red handkerchief round his waist. He stood perfectly motionless, following me with his eyes; his arms were folded, and he leaned somewhat back, with a half-savage, half-sneering smile upon his face. His frame was very muscular; he stood above five feet eleven inches in height. He was apparently in perfect health, but without one bit on him save hard sinew and muscle strung as tight as whipcord. Though I was by no means a weak man at the time, yet I felt I could be no match for such an antagonist in a personal struggle; and as I looked at the man before me, a model of activity and strength, with a daring and almost insolent look in the manner in which he threw back his head, I thought I had never seen a finer or a bolder figure.

'You wish to speak to me, Sir?'

'Yes,' said I—'but who are these men, and what are they doing here?'

'We were distilling poteen,' returned one of the men—'would your honour like to taste some?'

'No, thank you,' I replied; and drawing my chair near the fire, I began to chat.

They were civil enough, but seemed perfectly unconcerned as to what I might think of their illegal proceedings. McKey stood apart all the time, his arms still folded, and the young woman watching him intently. I suddenly addressed him.

'And so, McKey, you are the terror of the country, and no one dares take you?'

He made a quick and uneasy movement as I said this, and cast a rapid glance at the window.

'No one *has* taken me,' he replied—'but you said you wanted to speak to me?'

'Yes; I wanted to ask you how you expect all this to end. You owe five years' rent; you will pay nothing, and I hear you have sworn to shoot anyone who attempts to arrest you.'

He went over quietly to a great-coat which was hanging against the wall, and turning the coat upon the peg on which it hung, exposed the large brass-mounted handle of a horse-pistol projecting out of the pocket.

'Just so,' said I—'no wonder they are afraid of you.'

'You have a pretty set of bailiffs to be afraid of *that*,' returned he—and he drew the pistol out—and I saw it had neither lock nor barrel!

'That's what I frighten them with,' said he, as he replaced the pistol in the coat-pocket, and laughed heartily—his recollection seeming to recur to some ridiculous scene, which probably had passed. The men laughed too, and so did I; and for the first time also the young woman smiled, and seemed a little more at ease.

'Oh, that's all very well,' I remarked—rather put out of sorts, however, as the laugh was decidedly against me—'but you know well that you keep the whole country at bay, and no one dares take you.'

The laughter left his face now. 'And *why should* they take me? or—what I think worse of—why should they want to take my little place? I built the most of this house myself—look at the garden there,' he continued, as he flung open a back door. 'I have planted every stick, and I have raised every stone; and they hunt me now to give up my little place, and I will never give it up but with my life.'

He was much excited, and he breathed very quickly—not from speaking, but from anger.

'Never mind, Joe dear,' urged the young woman; 'this gentleman doesn't want to take it; no one does.'

McKey was quiet again. 'Will you walk this way, Sir? we had better speak on this matter alone;' and without waiting for an answer he left the kitchen, went past the hall door, and entered a room at the other end of the house.

He held the door open for me to follow. I did so; and as I entered he gave the door a peculiar slam after him, which made me look at it attentively, and I saw that the handle which turned the lock was gone, and that when the door was shut, no one could open the lock without some square instrument to turn it. Another glance thrown around the room showed me that there was nothing in it but two chairs and a small table, a bed, and beside the bed, a bill-hook—a most formidable-looking weapon—leaning against the wall. I took care to place myself between him and the bill-hook, and we both sat down at the table.

'That is your defender,' I remarked, pointing to the bill-hook.

'It is,' he briefly replied.

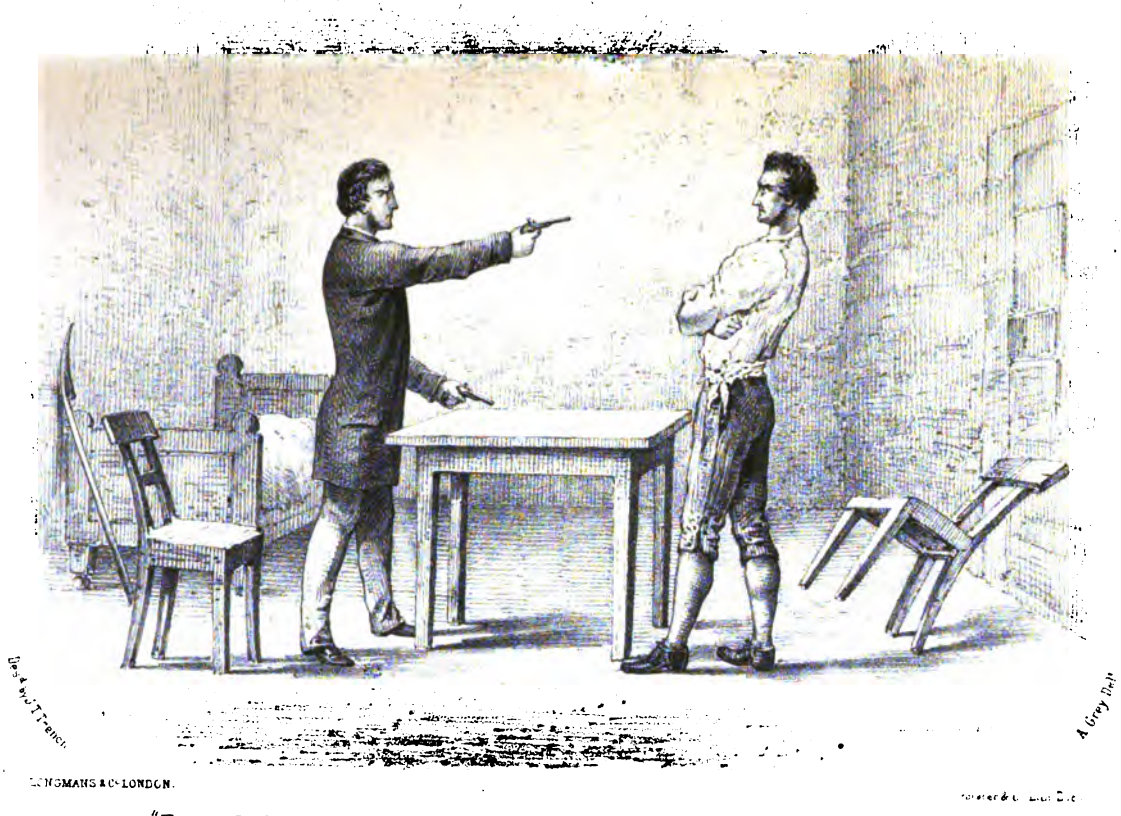
He then opened a drawer and took from it a petition or statement which he had drawn up himself, intending to send it to Lady Bath. This he read with great emphasis and unction. It was not badly drawn up; but it could only state his poverty, and the hardship of being required to leave his place because he was unable to pay for it.

'I fear,' said I, 'that this will hardly induce Lady Bath to leave you your land, unless you pay your rent—you will never pay it by making illicit whisky. I have come to ask you seriously what you are going to do, for you *must* know that things cannot go on with me as they did before.'

He rose up hastily, and stood opposite to me at the table:—'I never saw you before, Sir, and I don't know

what brings *you* of all men here now, but I tell you plainly, I never will surrender; I never will give up my little place. I have planted every stick—I have raised every stone,' he continued again, 'and I never will be taken, or give up my place but with my life.'

He became so excited, and glanced so often at the window and so often at the bill-hook, that I rose quickly too. His nerves seemed wrought into a most extraordinary state of tension, and he seemed gathering himself as if to spring at the bill-hook. I drew my pistols from my pocket, cocked them, and held one in either hand, my eye still fixed upon his. We stood opposite to each other, the small table only between us. I knew that if once a personal struggle should commence with such a frame as that, I had not a chance of my life, and feeling now convinced that he had got me into that room to kill me, I was determined if he stirred to shoot him. But a far different suspicion was in his mind, yet urging him on equally to violence. He thought that I had collected the bailiffs or police outside—that I had deceived him—that I had got into his house to arrest him myself; and he was determined either to take my life or lose his own, first. And there we stood, like two tigers, watching who would spring first. His eye met mine, but it did not quail in the least; and after watching one another for nearly half a minute—during which time almost a quiver of his eye would have made me shoot him, so great was the tension of my own nerves—I slowly and gradually raised the pistol—without losing for a moment the hold of my eye upon his—till it fairly covered his head. He watched me till he must have seen straight into the barrels of my pistol; when quietly drawing himself up, and folding his arms very slowly, as if to show that no sudden movement was intended, he seemed to defy me to fire. A feeling came over me as quick as lightning, with a convic-



Drawn by J. Franch.

A Grey Delt.

LONGMANS & Co. LONDON.

"He watched me till he must have seen straight into the barrels of my pistol."

LONGMANS & Co LONDON

"I flung the pistols on the table within his reach"

tion and suddenness which only moments such as these can bring—that I had mistaken him, that he was acting on the defensive rather than the offensive, and, with an impulse which to this hour I am wholly unable to account for, I flung the pistols on the table within his reach, and said in relief of my own excited feelings,

'You scoundrel, you know you dare not hurt me!'

He looked at me steadily, and then sitting down gradually and quietly on the chair, without trusting himself to look at the pistols which lay loaded and cocked on the table before him, he put his hands to his head, leaned his arms on the table, and said in a low voice—

'What do you want me to do, Sir?'

'To give me possession of your house and place at once,' said I, 'and to come with me now into Carrickmacross.'

'I will, Sir,' he replied.

He rose, put his iron finger into the place where the handle of the door should have been, and turned the bolt; and walking up to the other men in the kitchen he said, 'Begone out of that till I give up the place.' They stared at him and were perfectly astounded: 'Begone I say,' he repeated, and he pushed them out of the room.

The young woman then came up to him—'What is this, Joe?' she asked.

'You must go,' said he kindly. 'Don't talk—leave the house.'

She went at once. He put out the fire by kicking it about the floor, took 'sod and twig' from the garden, and handed me legal possession of the house and grounds!

'And now,' I continued, 'come with me into Carrickmacross.'

He hesitated: 'Sir, I will *follow* you in, but don't ask me to go with you.'

'Why not?' I asked.

'Because I always swore no man should ever take me alive, and if I was seen to go in with you the people would say you had taken me prisoner.'

'I understand you,' said I; 'can I trust you then to follow me?'

He seemed almost hurt at the question. 'I would not fail in my word for a thousand pounds!'

'I have not a doubt of it,' replied I; and I mounted my horse and galloped into Carrickmacross.

I told my head clerk and confidential man all that had happened. He could not believe his senses and thought I had lost mine. 'Well,' I said, 'M'Key will be in here within an hour, or I have been dreaming all the morning.'

'He will never come,' was his reply.

As the hour approached, I confess I became very nervous and anxious; and at length about the time I had stated, the clerk came into my inner room looking somewhat pale, and said, 'M'Key wants to see you in the office, Sir.'

There he was, quiet but firm as ever. I told him to return to his home for the present, and that I would see him handsomely provided for in America. He left and said no more.

The sequel was sad enough. He never reached America. The Presbyterian clergyman came to me soon after, and told me that M'Key was ill, but that I had need to mind myself, as he had it from a sure source that he was determined to take my life. In about a month after this, hearing again that he was very ill, I resolved to go and see him once more. I rode to the house, and found poor Joe M'Key lying on his bed, a corpse. The same stern mouth, the same noble forehead, but hollow and sunken cheeks. The young woman knelt beside him weeping.

'When did he die?' I asked.

Drawn by J.J. Trench. LONGMANS & Co LONDON. Forster & Co Lith Dublin A Grey Pict

"I would not fail in my word for a thousand pounds," said he,
I have not a doubt of it" replied I, and I galloped into Carrickmacross.

LONGMANS & Co LONDON

I found poor Joe McKey lying on his bed a corpse.
the Young woman knelt beside him weeping."

'This morning, Sir,' she replied, and her tears flowed fresh and fast.

'What did he die of?'

'A decline, Sir. He never got the better of that day. *The people said you took him—which your honour well knows was a rank lie*—and it broke his heart that they should say so.'

'He was a noble fellow in his way,' said I; 'but he had never been tamed, and I always feared he would come to grief.'

'Oh, Sir,' replied she in an agony, 'you did not know him, you did not know him! his heart was as tender as a little child's, and he was the kindest of the kind to me.'

'I fear you were never married to him?' I observed.

'And if I never was,' she replied almost angrily, 'what matter was it, when in the sight of God we were man and wife? I loved him as few wedded wives love their husbands, and wasn't Joe the best and truest of husbands to me? You did not know him, Sir—you did not know him! He would not have hurt a hair of your honour's head for worlds, but he was well-nigh maddened by the people.'

'And how did the people madden him?' I asked.

'Sure didn't they tell him over and over again that the land was his and not the landlord's at all? And then they swore all the oaths you could think of, they would soon have it all to themselves again. The poor boy that's lying there before you, had a darin' heart, so he had, more than all the rest of them together; so they put him on for beginning the war, which the bloody cowards were afeared to face themselves. Oh Joe, my darlin' Joe!' cried she in an agony of grief, as she turned to the corpse again, 'it was yourself that had the kind and darin' heart, and now they've broke it on you by saying you were took a prisoner, when no one knows better than his honour here that the power of man could never take my darlin' Joe alive. It

was the kind word that made him give in, and never the fear of mortal man.'

He was buried the following day. She soon after left the country.

From the moment that M°Key had appeared in my office, the feeling of that district changed, and the effects which I had anticipated followed. The people came in and paid their rents, or settled with me as best they could. Some went to America, some paid up by instalments; but the district over which Joe M°Key held sway, succumbed.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSPIRACY.

THE death of Joe M°Key threw a temporary damp over the plots of the Ribbon Confederacy; but I soon perceived that active steps were being taken by other parties to rouse the people to resistance, and to effect the much-desired object of 'putting Mr. Trench out of the way.' A cautious and organised conspiracy was now set on foot. I was informed from private and trustworthy sources that large subscriptions were being collected to pay the murderer who would consent '*to do the job*;' that 50*l.* was offered to anyone who would shoot me; and I was warned in the most earnest but friendly manner that my life was in imminent danger.

At first I could scarcely credit the truth of all these warnings. I was unconscious of having done one harsh act; I had not ejected one single tenant from the estate. I had availed myself of my original compact with Lady Bath, as arranged on my first accepting the agency of the estate, that I should never be required to turn out any tenant, even for non-payment of rent, without being able to offer him a free passage to any port in America he chose, giving him at the same time his stock and his crop, forgiving him all arrears, and allowing him to take away all that he had, provided he would only surrender the worn-out land whenever he became unable to pay for it. Liberality such as this, I well knew, had not been always exercised by landlords in

similar cases; but I took care that there should be no misunderstanding about it; and I announced these regulations in the most public manner in the estate office, at the Poor Law Board, and whenever opportunity occurred. Notwithstanding all this, however, I found a deep-rooted determination growing and increasing amongst a large body of the tenantry that they would not, under any circumstances, quit the land they had so long held almost rent-free; and perceiving that measures had been taken to provide them with the means of living elsewhere if they could not pay for their holdings, they resolutely determined to have me murdered, which would at least afford them a temporary respite, and perhaps deter, by the terror thus likely to be established, any other man from undertaking so dangerous a task as that of enforcing the payment of rent from that portion of the tenantry of the Bath Estate who felt disinclined to pay.

I need not say, that by no means all the tenants on the estate joined in or approved of these proceedings. Amongst the higher classes of tenants there were many who I firmly believe would have risked their own lives to save mine; and the many friendly peasants who gave me private warning of my danger, proved also that amongst a large portion of the lower classes the system now entered on was against their wishes. But partly through the terror established by the Ribbon Confederacy, and partly from a general feeling which then prevailed in the country, that all landlords and agents ought to be 'put down,' there could be no question that a considerable number of the tenantry, comprising even men 'well to do' in the world, subscribed, or tacitly approved of the measures which were now in progress for getting me put out of the way:—the ugly word 'murdered' is seldom used in Ireland when alluding to the killing of a landlord or agent.

The temper of a portion of the peasantry at this time around Carrickmacross, and on the borders of the counties of Armagh and Louth, was very bad indeed. Mr. Mauleverer, a gentleman residing near Crossmaglen, had been most barbarously murdered a short time before.* He was a magistrate and a land agent, and of a bold and fearless disposition; but mere boldness without caution is an unsafe protection from the stealthy attacks of the Ribbonman. Mr. Mauleverer usually carried pistols about him; but on this occasion he was going to meet the train at Culloville station, only a short distance from his house; and thinking that there could be no danger during so short a journey, he put his pistols in his hat-box and locked them up, intending on his return to have them ready for use and to be well prepared. He drove to the train on a hired outside car, and just as he came to a lonely part of the road about a mile from Culloville station, two men leaped out with bludgeons in their hands. Mr. Mauleverer instantly snatched at his hat-box to get his pistols; but his arms were suddenly seized, and he was pinioned so that he could not unlock the hat-box; and in this state held down by a false ruffian upon the car, he was brutally murdered, and his brains dashed out upon the road. Mr. Morant of Carrickmacross was in the country at the time; he rode to the spot soon afterwards, and saw the blood lying in pools upon the road where the murder had been committed.

Occurrences like this had a decided tendency to rouse the worst passions of the ill-disposed amongst the peasantry; and having once, as it were, tasted blood, there was no crime that *some* of them were not ready to commit, to put down a landlord or an agent.

At length my secret friends informed me that matters

* Mr. Mauleverer was murdered on May 23, 1850. Two men were tried for the murder, but acquitted.

were drawing to a crisis; that a meeting had been held amongst the leaders of the Ribbon Association; that I had been formally tried by a judge and jury in a large barn at one of the tenants' houses; that I had been found guilty of being 'an exterminator' (though I had not evicted a single tenant); and that they knew they had no chance of having things any longer their own way '*unless Trench was put off the walk*:' such was the expression used for a final determination that I should be deliberately murdered.

Steps were accordingly taken to have this sentence carried into effect. The money was collected; and after a little time two men were chosen (neither of whom lived on the estate, and neither of whom had I ever known or injured), as the instruments of the intended crime. One of these was a bold active young man named Hodgins—I believe he had been a navvy employed at some railway works near Castleblaney, and was quite a stranger in the locality. The other was an idle good-for-nothing fellow, living in a small hut between Carrickmacross and Inniskeen, near the estate but not actually on it. He was a weak small man but clever and cunning to a degree, of great resource in difficulties, and, I suspect, an arrant coward at heart. His name was Thornton. He did not seem to be naturally of a cruel or bloody disposition, but he took delight in waylaying, and plotting, and hiding, and contriving my death, much in the same way that a deer-stalker of the present day enjoys the various contrivances of stealthy approach by which he can get a shot at the antlered monarch of the glen.

The description afterwards given to me of this Ribbon trial, by Thornton himself, who was present at the whole scene, was strange and curious. Notice had been sent round a short time before to some of the most active and trusted Ribbonmen that 'Trench was to be tried' on a certain night. The parties met accordingly at one of the

chief Ribbonmen's houses situated centrally on the estate. They did not confine themselves to the orthodox number of twelve, as I believe there were fifteen or sixteen present. They were presided over by the owner of the farm, a man well known to me and holding a considerable quantity of land. The house where the trial took place was a large barn, in which was placed a long table, forms were arranged for seats, and plenty of whisky was supplied by a barefooted girl in attendance. The president or judge sat on a chair at the head of the table. The party drank for some time in silence, or speaking to one another only in whispers; and when all were well steeped in liquor, the president—with a curious silent leap over the whole of the accusation and prosecution, and even the name of the accused, all of which the jurors were supposed perfectly to understand—broke the silence for the first time and said aloud:—

'Well boys, can anyone say anything in his defence?'

There was a short silence, when one of the conspirators said:—

'He gave me an iron gate.'

'May your cattle break their necks in it!' replied the president.

'He gave me slates and timber to roof my house,' said another.

'May the roof soon rot and fall!' replied the president.

'He drained my land,' said another.

'May the crop sour in the heart of it!' replied the president.

'He gave a neighbour of mine wine for a sick child,' observed another.

'The child died!' said the president.

All were again silent.

'Guilty,' said the president. 'Boys, he *must die*; and now let us draw lots for the one that will do it.'

There was some hesitation when this terrible process was proposed; at last one of the men said—

'There is no occasion to draw lots; the men to do the job are here, and are both ready and willing.'

And so it proved. The two assassins had been introduced, and were present at the whole scene; and then and there were sworn to follow me and hunt me from day to day, from night to night, and from place to place, to watch my movements, to make themselves acquainted with my person, and never to leave my track night or day, until they should leave me a bloody corpse.

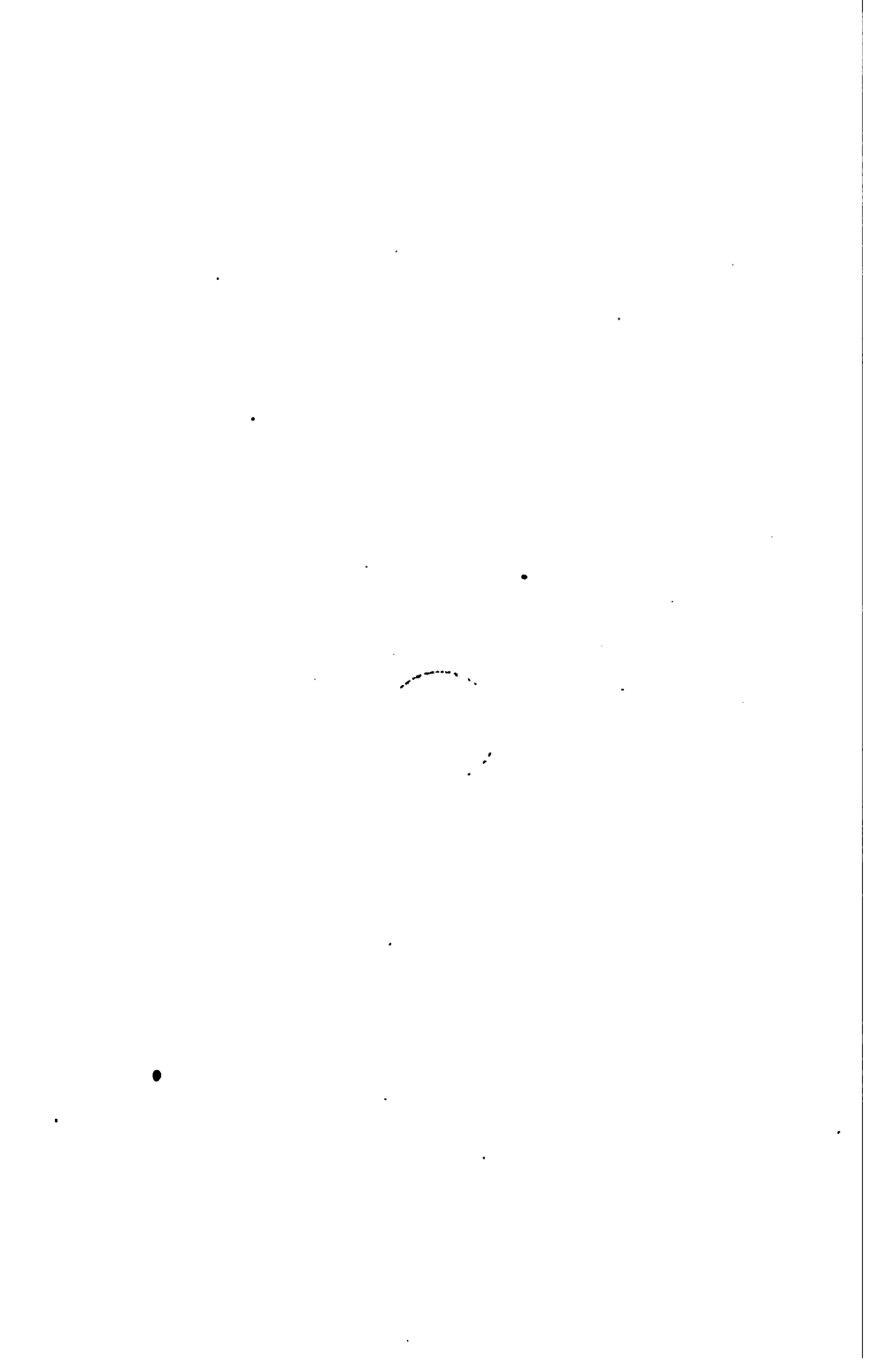
The oath having been sworn, all again set themselves round the table to drink. More liquor was introduced; and the business of the evening having been satisfactorily concluded, much merriment and hilarity were indulged in. Many wild and exciting stories were told of landlords and agents who had been murdered, of the plots and contrivances by which they had been successfully waylaid, of the hairbreadth escapes of the 'boys who had done it,' and many jokes were passed at the victims being so suddenly 'sent to hell!'

By degrees as the liquor told upon the party the conversation grew fast and furious, and various subjects were introduced and commented on in their own wild way.

'They say,' observed one of the leaders, 'that if the boys had held out well when they rose in 1641 they could have had the country to themselves, and driven every Saxon out of it. I hear there was great sport up at the Castle at Carrickmacross that time, and that they put a rope round the agent's neck and were going to hang him at his own hall door.'

'Bad luck to them for spalpeens that they didn't hang him,' said another. 'If we had the country all to ourselves now, I know how it would be!'

The oath having been sworn, all again set themselves round the table to drink.



'Some says it's the land laws that's mighty bad,' observed another; 'that it's them that's crushing us down, and that they are going to bring in a bill—as they call it—to alter them.'

'A curse upon the land laws,' cried the president, 'and all concerned in them. It's the *land itself* we want, and not all this bother about the laws. The laws is not so bad in the main, barrin' they make us pay rent at all. What good would altering the laws do us? sure we have tenant-right, and fair play enough, for that matter, for Trench never puts any one off the land that's able to pay his rent, and stand his ground on it. *But why would we pay rent at all?* That's the question, say I. Isn't the land our own, and wasn't it our ancestors' before us, until these bloody English came and took it all away from us? My curse upon them for it—but we will tear it back out of their heart's blood yet.'

'In troth then ye'll have tough work of it before ye do,' rejoined another. 'Them Saxons is a terrible strong lot to deal with. They beat down ould Ireland before, and I doubt but they'll hold on the land still, and beat her down again, rise when ye may.'

'None of your croakin,' cried the president. 'Sure it's not more than three hundred years since they took it all from us, and many a country has risen and held its own again after a longer slavery than that. I say, THE LAND we must have, and cursed be the hand and withered the arm that will not strike a blow to gain it!'

'Some say it's the Church that's crushing us,' suggested one of the party who had not spoken before.

'Damn the Church, and you along with it,' cried the president in a passion. 'What harm does the Church do you or anyone else? The gentlemen that owns it are quiet dacent men, and often good to the poor. *It's the land,* I

say again, *it's the land*, we want. The Saxon robbers took it from our forefathers, and I say again we'll wrench it out of their heart's blood; and what better beginning could we have than to blow Trench to shivers off the walk?'

'True for ye' said another, 'so far as that goes, but ye are wrong about the Church for all that. Sure isn't it what they call the dominan' Church, and what right has it to dominate over our own clargy, who are as good as them any day. Up wid our clargy, and down with the dominan' Church! say I. Besides,' continued he more softly, 'maybe if we had once a hold of the church lands, the landlords' lands would be 'asier come at after.'

'Why then that may be true too,' said the president; 'down with the Church, down with the landlords, down with the agents, down with every thing, say I, that stands in the way of our own green land coming back to us again.'

'What wonderful grand fun we'll have fightin' among ourselves when it does come!' said a thick-set Herculean fellow at the lower end of the table.

'Well now I often thought of that!' replied his neighbour in a whisper. 'It'll be bloody work then in airnest, as sure as you and I live to see it. Anything that has happened up to this will be only a joke to what will happen then.'

'And what matter?' cried the advocate for fighting. 'Sure wouldn't it be far better any day to be fightin' among friends, than have no fightin' at all, and be slaves to our enemies? By the powers,' cried he, and he gave the table a salient stroke with his shilelagh that made the punch-glasses leap, 'but I would rather go out as our ancestors did before us, with the skeine in our hands, and the skins of wild beasts upon our backs, and fight away till the best man had it, than be the slaves we are now, paying rint in

the office, and acknowledging them Saxons as our landlords!'*

'True for ye, Larry,' said the president; 'and now, boys, be 'asy, and don't make so much noise, lest maybe the polis would be down upon us. Ned dear,' continued he, in a gentle voice, as he saw the necessity of appeasing the rougher spirits of the gang, 'couldn't ye give us a song, or a bit of poethry, or anything of that sort, just to sweeten the liquor a bit, as sugar is mighty scarce down at this end of the table?'

The young man thus addressed was a pale delicate-looking youth, possessing a form and features which one could hardly expect to find amongst such companions. In early life he had been intended for the priesthood; but feeling a repugnance to that profession—being fond, as he said, of poetry, and still fonder of the girls—he commenced reading for the situation of a national schoolmaster. Whether the girls were unkind to him, or whether he liked the excitement of a wild idle life—plotting and conspiring, and telling tales to the unlettered peasantry of the tyranny and oppression under which his native land groaned at the hand of the relentless Saxon—I know not; but at that

* That a strong feeling existed then amongst the peasantry of Ireland (and to a certain extent exists even now), that the ancient families would yet recover the forfeited estates, there is no doubt. In my intercourse amongst them this idea has cropped up in many ways and on repeated occasions. I have appended a facsimile of a map which was given me some little time ago, published in 1846, about the time when the repeal movement was in full force, and immediately previous to Smith O'Brien's rebellion, at a time when this idea pervaded the minds of the people in a peculiar degree.

The map is worthy of study, as it professes to show the 'territories possessed by each of the high princes, lords, and chiefs, from the 11th to the 17th century,' and 'also of the great Anglo-Norman and old English families, from the reign of Henry II. to that of Elizabeth, comprising the period from the end of the 12th to about the middle of the 16th century.'

I have never been able to procure a copy of 'the printed sheet accompanying the map' alluded to in the remarkable title prefixed to this curious document, and should be greatly obliged to any person who would kindly lend me one. It shall be faithfully and carefully returned.

time he had joined the Ribbonmen, and was a favourite at their meetings from his minstrel tendencies and capability of finishing the evening with a song.

'Well indeed, Mr. President,' said the minstrel modestly, 'I don't remember any neat and suitable song just now, unless it be the great song of '98 ye would have—they call it the "Shan Van Voght."'

'The Shan Van Voght! the Shan Van Voght!' shouted all the party vociferously, 'give us the Shan Van Voght.'

'Well ye see,' continued the minstrel in the same modest voice, 'I'm loth to give it to ye, as it was made a present to myself by a boy from a far country, and an illigant poet that same boy was. Oh if ye only heard him! he would talk poethry as 'asy as say his A. B. He told me he came from the far off county of Kerry, and that they were singing them songs night and day on the mountains in those parts.'

'Ah then how did ye come across him,' asked one of the party, 'and he all the way from the county Kerry?'

'In troth then I came across him 'asy enough,' replied the minstrel. 'I met him in the fair of Mullacrew, where he came up the country with some of the weeniest little bastes that ever ye saw in all your life. Ye'd think they were all young calves only for the horns of them; and when he had nothing better to do, and couldn't sell the little bastes to his mind, ye'd hear him singin' and repatin' poethry to himself. "What's that you're saying?" says I to him when I heard him singin' to himself. "Only a bit of poethry," says he. "What is it?" says I. "It's what they sing on the mountains down in Kerry," says he, and he repated as much poethry and music as ever you heard tell of in your life.'

'They're a cliver people down in them parts?' said the president.

'Ye may say that and tell no lie,' replied the minstrel. 'I only remember a few lines of all he told me; but they were something like this:—

Oh the land! the land!
Our own green land!
And the song of "God speed the plough" my boys,
And Erin shall stand
With a harp in her hand,
And an emerald crown on her brow, my boys!'

'Hurrah, well done!' cried the Ribbonmen. 'That's your sort! give us some more of that!'

'Troth and I can't,' replied the minstrel. 'Them is the only lines I remember. But if we had the Kerry boy with us, it's he that would keep you going all night.'

'"*Our own green land!*"' repeated the president thoughtfully; 'Them will be glorious times no doubt. I wonder will they ever come round.'

'I doubt it,' replied the minstrel. 'They say the mills of Louth will turn round three times with blood before the land becomes our own again, but faix I often do be thinking it's our own blood will turn the wheel! and troth if that be the case I would sooner it stood still for many a twelve-month longer. Man alive!' continued the minstrel, who in the midst of all his wildness and folly had acquired some scattered knowledge from reading the newspapers and books of the day, 'man alive, you'll hear the people say that if Ireland would only rise against England in airnest, she'd soon show them she'd be free. But I tell ye they know nothing about it that says so. Ireland will never rise against England. *It's one half of Ireland must rise against the other half*—the Catholics who haven't the land, against the Protestants who have. It would be hard to say which would win if they were left alone to fight it out between themselves, for the Protestants are terrible chaps for

fightin' when they're put to it, and moreover maybe some of the Catholics would join them. And then down comes England with her army of soldiers and all her cannon at her back to help the bloody Protestants, and what chance would the people have then?'

'It's too true,' replied the president. 'It's all too true entirely, but howld you your tongue about that, and don't be putting it that way before the people. Wait till the big war comes any way, and then we'll see what will turn up.'

'All right,' replied the minstrel. 'Leave it so; but mind I tell ye it's a worse look-out than many of ye think. And now for the "Shan Van Voght."'

His voice was sweet and musical, and possessed a rich mellow softness that would have touched the sympathies of a far more refined audience than that around the Ribbon table. He rose from his seat, passed his hand conceitedly through his hair, and assuming what he considered to be an effective attitude, as he was in truth somewhat of a coxcomb, he sang,

THE SONG OF '98.

1

Oh, the French are on the sea,
Said the Shan Van Voght;
Oh, the French are on the sea,
Said the Shan Van Voght;
The French are in the bay,
They'll be here without delay,
And the orange shall decay,
Said the Shan Van Voght.

2

What will the yeomen do?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
What will the yeomen do?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
What should the yeomen do,
But give up the red and blue,
And promise to be true
To the Shan Van Voght.

3
Where will they pitch their camp?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
Where will they pitch their camp?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
On the Curragh of Kildare,
And Lord Edward will be there,
And our pikes in good repair,
Said the Shan Van Voght.

4
What colour shall be seen?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
What colour shall be seen?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
What colour *should* be seen?
But our own immortal green!
That's the colour shall be seen,
Said the Shan Van Voght.

5
Will Ireland then be free?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
Will Ireland then be free?
Said the Shan Van Voght;
Yes, Ireland *shall* be free,
From the centre to the sea,
And hurrah for Liberty!
Said the Shan Van Voght! *

At length the party seemed inclined to break up, when the president, with whom I was well acquainted, as he rose, called out to the sworn assassins, who were sitting drinking behind some sacks,

'Well boys, don't shoot him until after next Thursday, anyhow; he promised to give me two iron gates for my farm on that day, and I may as well get that much out of him before he dies.'

A roar of laughter followed this disinterested respite of

* The air to which the above is usually sung in Ireland will be found in the Appendix. I have met with quite an erroneous version of it, published some time ago in London.

my life, and the party were about to separate, when one of them called out,

'Boys, oughtn't we to give him fair notice?'

'For why and for what?' asked the president grimly, 'isn't he condemned to die, and what notice would he want?'

'By this and by that,' returned the first speaker, 'but I say he *must* have notice. I will never consent to his death until he be fairly warned first; it is the rule and the law, and notice I say he must get.'

'Give it yourself, then,' said the president, 'and you had better make a clean job of it while you are about it, and inform on us all, and go off with the blood-money in your pocket.'

'I'm as true and darin' a man as you are,' said the bold Ribbonman, 'but I say he should get warnin'. Maybe he'd be off quick enough if he heard that he was sure to be shot, and then we'd have the land to ourselves without rint, as we had before he came.'

'Sorra foot he'll go,' said another; 'I know him well, and ye'll only put him up to what's coming, and maybe not find it so 'asy to come at him afterwards, for he's a terrible sure shot.'

'What's the good of them that's paid to do the job,' said the first speaker, 'if they can't bring him down and they at it day and night? I say he *must* get warning, and I'll have it drawn out myself and sarved on him.'

'That's but fair, that's but fair,' shouted the other conspirators.

'Let it be posted on all the chapels next Sunday, and he'll be sure to hear of it.'

'In troth I'll just do that same,' said this hero of 'fair play;' and all severally went their way.

In accordance with this specimen of Ribbonite 'fair play,' a document was drawn up, and the next Sunday the police

found a notice, formally posted on every Roman Catholic chapel in the district, of which the following is an exact copy. I have the original at this moment in my possession:—

'To Landlords, Agents, Bailiffs, Grippers, process-servers, and usurpers or underminers who wish to step into the evicted tenants' property, and to all others concerned in Tyranny and Oppression of the poor on the Bath Estate.

'TAKE NOTICE.

'That you are hereby (under the pain of a certain punishment which will inevitably occur) prohibited from evicting tenants, executing decrees, serving process, distraining for rent, or going into another's land, or to assist any tyrant, Landlord, or Agent in his insatiable desire for depopulation. Recollect the fate of Mauleverer, on this his anniversary. Dated May 23, 1851.'

From the moment this notice appeared, I was considered by the tenantry in general as a doomed, or, as they termed it, 'a dead man.' It had a strange and depressing effect upon the spirits to mark the difference in the bearing and manner of the peasantry, from the moment that this document was issued. It was thoroughly known that such a document as that, posted simultaneously on three different chapels in the district, could only have emanated from the leaders of the Ribbon Conspiracy; none others would have dared to take such a step; and it was equally well known that chosen men were under heavy pay to carry the threat into execution. This being now well understood by the whole population, I was looked upon as it were a criminal condemned to die, and men, who before had saluted

me in a cordial and friendly manner when we met, now passed me in silence with half-averted faces and pitying looks, and a silent touch of the hat in salutation, as if they scarcely dared to recognise the man who was doomed to be so soon a corpse.*

* I quite feel that I have by no means done justice to the graphic description given to me of this remarkable scene by Thornton when in his prison cell in Monaghan.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MURDER.

IT may be supposed that my own feelings at this time were anything but agreeable. I could not but perceive that I was indeed 'a doomed man;' and unless I threw up my post and left the country, I was well aware I had but a small chance of my life. There is something very terrible in the knowledge that a cruel and vindictive enemy is determined to pursue you, and to kill you whenever an opportunity may occur—whether with bludgeon, stone, pistol, or blunderbuss—that you are watched day and night, your habits noted, your most private actions marked, and that whether abroad or in the house, in your bedroom or on horseback, never for one moment are you safe from a murderous attack. It is a position which tells severely upon the nerves. I knew all this, yet had no alternative but to face it or leave the post of duty. So I resolved to look the whole position of affairs calmly in the face. I began by a thorough reconsideration of all my past measures, and endeavoured to ascertain if I had in any degree outstepped the plainest and most absolute duties of my office. The mind at such a time becomes singularly lucid and unclouded, and if one has done anything harshly or hastily, conscience is sure to bring it out in the most uninviting colours. But after the calmest reflection, I came to the conclusion that I had done nothing but my duty; that in offering emigration to America at the landlord's expense, besides forgiveness of all

arrears, and his full stock and crop to every tenant and his family who could not pay his rent, I had done all on behalf of the landlord which he ought or could be expected to do; and hence I was bound to see either that rent was paid, or that these liberal terms were accepted. Accordingly I determined to remain and face my enemies, and see this quarrel to the end. My health was good, my nerves were firm; and hoping to be as watchful as my foes, I let it be clearly understood that I had entered the lists with the Ribbonmen and would fight this matter out.

Both parties now began to take their measures cautiously. The first step of the Ribbonmen was a clever and a curious one. I have mentioned that the men chosen 'to do the job' were altogether unknown to me. They were ignorant even of my appearance. But lest there should be any mistake as to my identity, the following plan was adopted. The two men were taken into the Court House of Carrick-macross, on Petty Sessions day, where I happened to be sitting as chairman, amongst the magistrates, and they were told to watch my countenance carefully.

'You will see him,' said the stealthy Ribbonman who conducted them, 'sometimes pleased and sometimes vexed; sometimes he will speak loud, and sometimes low; sometimes you will see anger on his countenance, and sometimes you will see him pleased and laughing; and if you watch him cleverly all day in court and then watch him as he leaves it with his hat on, and follow him down the street as he walks, you cannot fail to know him again whether by night or by day.' One of the villains afterwards confessed to me personally, that he had done all this, and that he 'would have known me out of ten thousand.' Their next step was to procure a blunderbuss. The history of this blunderbuss was a strange one. It had been purchased and brought over from England by a man named Muckian, who lived

not very far from Tullyvara, with a view, no doubt, to the performance of some deed of blood. So careful and anxious was he that no one should detect its presence on his journey, that he hid it under his shirt, and placed it next his bare flesh. From what cause I know not, but probably from the verdigris acting on an unhealthy skin, a large sore appeared upon the spot where it had lain so long touching his person. The sore increased gradually in size and virulence, until at last he died of its effects in the most excruciating pain. From him it passed into the hands of those who had undertaken to be my assassins, and they kept it as bright as if it had always been in a Police Barrack. One of the men was armed with this, the other with a brace of pistols; and the plan agreed on was to fire the blunderbuss first, and if I was knocked over to finish me with the pistols; and if the blunderbuss failed in its aim, then the pistols were to be used offensively or defensively as circumstances might require. Thus armed and prepared, they lay in wait for me day and night. But neither had I been idle in my preparations. I purchased two revolvers, each of them having six barrels; these I always carried about me when I went out to any distance, and day and night, when in the house, they were on a table close beside me, carefully loaded and capped. Besides these I had two small double-barrelled pocket-pistols to be used at close quarters if occasion required, and a pair of double-barrelled horse-pistols of a larger size in holsters before me on my saddle; thus having twenty shots always around my person when I rode out on horseback, which was my usual mode of locomotion.

I could not, however, avoid perceiving that all this preparation would probably be utterly valueless in a case of cautious waylaying, as the Ribbonmen would thus have the first shot at me—and if I were hit, my armament would

be of little use; so I made up my mind never to leave the house, as long as this state of things lasted, without two able young men (one of them usually my own son) well armed and riding one on either side of me if I went on horseback, and if I went on a car, accompanying me with loaded double-barrelled guns in their hands, ready to fire at a moment's notice.

Having also observed from several preceding attacks which had been made on other people, that the moment anyone was shot a rush of his friends was made to raise and support him, and that thus the murderers in the confusion made their escape, I made it a request with my young friends that if I was shot, and fell, no attention whatever should be paid to me until they had first arrested or shot the murderers, and *then*, and *not till then*, were they to come to my assistance. And it was fully agreed amongst us that we should all act on this principle, no matter which of us might fall. The driver of the car also got solemn warning—on the pain of being considered an accomplice and perhaps struck down as such—that the moment a shot was fired, he was instantly to stop his horse, the young men, and all who should happen to be unhurt, were then to leap off the car with the double-barrelled guns in their hands and pursue, capture, fight, or shoot upon the spot, as circumstances might require, whoever might be the assassins—but, dead or alive, to secure them.

The vigorous measures which were thus adopted, soon got wind amongst the conspirators, mainly, I suspect, through the car drivers. We never concealed where we were going. I made frequent appointments to be at certain places at certain times, and always kept them, anxious if possible to bring matters to a crisis and have it out with the assassins in open fight. But they were far too cautious; and one of them afterwards confessed to me that

he had let us pass over and over again, he and his companion lying quietly with cocked blunderbuss behind the hedge, 'knowing,' as he said, 'that it would be sure death to himself if he fired.'

At length having carried on this warfare for nearly a year, during the whole of which time I steadily persisted in my determination never to go out without my young stout friendly guards, the assassins gave up the plans they had agreed on, and proposed more stealthy arrangements. One of these was to watch me as I passed at night from my office to my dwelling-house across the street of Carrickmacross and to shoot me in the middle of the town. The house I lodged in at the time was almost exactly opposite my office. I was in the habit of sitting up late at business, and between ten and eleven o'clock at night I was accustomed to leave the office and cross the street, usually without guards, not thinking there could be any real danger in the midst of a public street. But I soon received private information that even here they were on the watch for me, and I was warned to let no one near me whilst crossing to my lodgings, as an attempt would be made to present a letter and shoot me while accepting it. The assassin was then to drop his pistol on the ground, and be amongst the first to rush to the aid of the 'poor gentleman that was hurt!'

I soon discovered that the information of this formidable plot was not given a day too soon, as several attempts to approach me in the manner described were made immediately afterwards. Forewarned, however, I was forearmed; and I now never passed to my lodgings without a brace of large double-barrelled pistols openly in my hands, and the moment anyone, no matter who, came near me as I crossed the street in the night, I presented the pistols at him while yet within fifteen or twenty paces, and

requested he would keep at a respectful distance, as I would allow no one to come near me there. Thus all were kept away; and I believe I very much astonished some innocent people by accosting them in this strange manner.

Another plan was to shoot me as I walked alone from the town of Carrickmacross to the Poor-house, when attending the meetings of the Board of Guardians, of which I was chairman. Between the town and union-house there is a space of open ground, without any houses immediately near. This road I sometimes walked unaccompanied by any guards, for the town was so close that I conceived there could be but little danger in doing so. In this, however, I was mistaken. Twice was I waylaid there, the assassin, armed with a pistol, intending to shoot me by putting the pistol to my breast as I passed, fire it, then drop the pistol, and run for his life across the country. His companion afterwards confessed to me that on one occasion I escaped only by his having failed to bring the assassin a light pair of shoes in sufficient time, before I passed, to enable him, after the attack, to run more quickly than he could in his 'brogues;' and on another occasion, by my friend Mr. Morant appearing at the very moment round a corner close by, just as he was about to fire. Thus for upwards of a year I was watched and waylaid, hunted and pursued by my intended murderers, they being supported by subscriptions all the time; until at last, quite disheartened at their want of success, they went to their employers, and swearing that all the luck was on my side and against them, they determined 'to give me up as a bad job, but that they had no objection to shoot Paddy M^{c}Ardle (the bailiff), who would do nearly as well, and maybe the luck might not be so much with him.'

It was very difficult during the whole of this trying period to keep sufficiently on the alert. One soon becomes

familiar with danger, especially a hidden danger; and were it not for some fearful lessons which occurred about this time in the neighbourhood, to warn me, I feel convinced that by degrees I should have relaxed my caution, and thus become an easy victim.

Two of those I particularly remember. One was an attack made upon Mr. Chambre,* a magistrate, who lived in a somewhat remote district in the mountains in the county of Armagh. I was not personally acquainted with this gentleman, but I had heard of him as a most active and improving resident landlord. As is usually the case under these circumstances, he had incurred the displeasure of the Ribbon Society, and they determined to put him out of the way. The plan adopted was to lie in wait for him as he returned on his car from Petty Sessions, and shoot him near his own house. On the evening of the day appointed for his murder, he was returning on an outside car, accompanied by his servant and one or two friends, all, I believe, well-armed, as he was aware of his danger; when, from behind a low wall, a volley was fired which soon emptied the seats of the car. Mr. Chambre fell to the ground severely and dangerously wounded; none of the others, I believe, were hurt; but, as is usual under such circumstances, seeing Mr. Chambre wounded and bleeding on the ground, his friends and the servant rushed to his assistance, and in the meantime the murderers—of whom it was generally believed there were four or five behind the wall—ran away and escaped detection at the time, though a man named Barry or Barret was afterwards hanged for the offence. When the car was emptied, the horse, terrified by the shots—and I believe wounded and bleeding—dashed off towards the house, and Mrs. Chambre, who was

* Mr. Chambre, if I recollect aright, was attacked in January 1852.

anxiously expecting her husband home to dinner, was startled, as she walked out with the hope of meeting him, by seeing the horse and empty car coming furiously up the approach. Her feelings may be imagined. Assistance was immediately procured, and Mr. Chambre was brought home bleeding and weak, and with but little hope of his recovery. Contrary to general expectation, however, he did recover, after a long and serious illness, and I believe he is now alive. Such was the correct account of this attack.

It was the example of this case which made me and my young friends agree, that, as soon as a shot was fired at the party, all who were unhurt should immediately dash at the assassins, without waiting for a moment to give assistance to the wounded party, whoever he might be, as two or three minutes' delay could make but little difference to him.

But another most serious lesson of warning was brought more immediately under my own observation. The circumstances having happened to an acquaintance and friend, with whom I was in familiar social intercourse, I will relate them more in detail.

Mr. Bateson was a gentleman of good family and position in the north of Ireland. He was a well-educated and intelligent man, in appearance about sixty years of age. He was kind-hearted, social, and liberal; and he had undertaken the management of the Templetown Estates, near Castleblaney.

Mr. Bateson, being a bachelor, lived in the excellent hotel in Castleblaney, close to which the main bulk of the Templetown Estate in that district is situated, 'Tenant-right,' in the full northern acceptation of the term, had always prevailed over the estate, and the tenants were for the most part comfortable and respectable.

With a view to improve the agriculture of the district,

Mr. Bateson had formed the plan of establishing a model agricultural farm, on which could be tried every new experiment, at the cost of the landlord, and for the information and instruction of the tenants. On this farm the newest improvements in draining and subsoiling, green cropping, manuring, and machinery of every kind, were in daily use and operation; the whole was open to the inspection of the public, whilst the tenants of the Templetown Estate were specially invited to visit the works, and derive what advantage they could from the improved systems of husbandry which were there adopted.

I have not any accurate knowledge of the details with reference to the process of taking up the land for the purpose of establishing this model farm; but I was given to understand that it had been taken into the landlord's hands in the famine years of 1848 and 1849. Although a considerable portion of it had then lain vacant, yet to form a compact farm, lying well together and fit for the purposes designed, it was necessary, to make several small changes and consolidations, and to remove some of those tenants whose land lay contiguous to the model farm and was required for its completion. These tenants were placed in other holdings on the estate; yet from these changes, which were absolutely necessary to the establishment of the proposed design, some ill-will appears to have been created towards Mr. Bateson. Such was the account of the matter which I heard at the time from apparently reliable sources, and I have every reason to believe that the account was substantially true.

The spirit of disaffection, which has been already described, was not confined to the district of Carrickmacross; it extended into the county of Armagh, and the town and neighbourhood of Crossmaglen obtained an unenviable notoriety. Castleblaney had hitherto been quiet, but it was

determined that the ramifications of the Ribbon Confederacy should extend there also; and Mr. Bateson being an improver, and, above all, having established a model farm (a precedent which it was thought might lead to other and more important innovations), it was arranged that he should be 'put out of the way.'

I had no eye-witness in his case, such as was afforded me by a strange accident in my own trial, to describe the details of the scene which was enacted when Mr. Bateson's death was determined on. But doubtless in his case also a jury of 'the right sort' was summoned; whisky in abundance being probably on the table; his guilt, I suppose, was also silently presumed, and the gulf of the indictment against him was leaped over in a silent bound, as it was with me; and when anyone ventured, half in mockery, to suggest a few words in his favour, or to tell of any acts of kindness which he might have shown—perhaps to some of the jurors themselves—I doubt not they were silenced by the president in the same grim and cruel manner as had been done in my own case. To Mr. Bateson also it appears that the strange law of Ribbon 'fair play' was accorded, and he duly received a 'threatening notice,' warning him of his intended murder.

Mr. Bateson was a man of a bold and confident disposition; and though his friends were much alarmed when he received this notice, yet he scarcely paid any attention to it. He also received sundry warnings of a friendly nature, apprising him of his danger; but these also he disregarded, and continued day after day walking out alone to his favourite model farm, which was situated about a mile from the town, armed sometimes with a pocket-pistol, and sometimes not armed at all. His friends seeing him so confident, as time passed on without any attempted violence, at length began to forget the danger, and it was

hoped the notice he had received might only have been an idle threat.

But Ribbonmen in a disturbed district do not generally threaten idly. They had abided by their wild rule of fair play in giving their victim warning, and they were now steadily and stealthily plotting his sure destruction.

On the evening of December 4, 1851, Mr. Bateson was quietly and without the least suspicion of danger returning home from his model farm along the public road leading from Castleblaney to Armagh. He was walking carelessly and slowly along the footpath, not half-a-mile from the town of Castleblaney, when a man overtook him, and touching his hat with the usual salutation of a peasant, bid him a 'good evening,' remarked on the fineness of the weather, and entered into friendly discourse. Mr. Bateson, who was of an accessible disposition, kind and courteous to the humblest peasant, at once joined with him in conversation, and thus they continued walking and talking for a few hundred yards. Suddenly Mr. Bateson felt his collar grasped from behind by a person hitherto unseen, and a pistol was fired into his neck; the ball penetrated and passed through the throat. As he was staggering from the shot, and about to call on his companion for help, he received a violent blow from the miscreant to whom he had been talking which felled him to the ground; and when down, both assassins set upon him, and beat in his skull with the pistol, and with stones, until his brains protruded. In this state he was found by a carman who drove a public conveyance from Armagh to Castleblaney. He was then unconscious, but still breathing. Immediate information was given to the police and to his friends in the town, and the unfortunate gentleman was carried, still senseless, into the hotel where he resided.

The news of such a murder as this spread like wildfire

over the country, and early the following morning Mr. Morant and I received information of the event. The intelligence that a friend, with whom you have been on kindly and intimate terms, has been barbarously murdered in your immediate neighbourhood, has a peculiar effect upon the nerves and temper. I was well aware that Mr. Bateson was a marked man—that for him, as well as for myself, assassins were lying constantly in wait; but when the news arrived that they had actually succeeded in laying low their victim, it was hard to keep down a feeling of the most intense revenge.

Mr. Morant and I resolved at once to ride to the scene of the murder. I cannot say that we expected any good result from doing so; but we wished to manifest our abhorrence of the deed, to offer our services in any form in which they could be effective, and to show sympathy with the sufferings of our friend, whom we heard was still alive.

Feeling assured, however, that our ride to Castleblaney would not be unattended with danger, we resolved to go well armed and prepared. I duly arranged my fire-arms around my person, and Mr. Morant—who had also passed through some trying scenes—rigged himself out in a most extraordinary suit of armour. On his head he wore a steel hat covered with black cloth; a short coat of buffalo-hide encased the upper part of his person; so stiff, tough, and thick was this coat, that though certainly not proof against a modern rifle-ball, yet I really believe it was fully capable of turning aside any slugs or bullets likely to be discharged from an ill-loaded blunderbuss or pistol. He delighted to think, 'how disappointed the rascals would be when he did not fall to their shot;' and though he admitted 'being hit on the legs would not be pleasant,' yet he seemed certain that he would get the better of the Ribbonmen in an encounter.

And as I commenced before them all to put my pistols into my holsters, the smiles and nudges of the lookers on were incessant

We were accompanied by my son, J. Townsend Trench, also well armed; and in this trim we mounted our horses opposite my temporary lodgings in the street at Carrick-macross. It was ludicrous to watch the faces of the peasantry who had collected in the street to see us mount. There was a curious mixture of triumph, fear, and amusement on their faces at the appearance of Mr. Morant's buffalo-hide, which had a most comical effect; and as I proceeded before them all to put my pistols carefully into my holsters, the winks and nudges were incessant. Several other pistols peeped out from the breast-pockets of my coat in all the brightness of their silver-mounted handles. Mr. Morant, who had mounted at his own hall door, and had now called for us, sat upon his horse, coolly smoking his cigar, looking down upon the admiring peasantry, with the most supreme indifference and contempt for his enemies expressed in every feature of his face.

We met but few people upon the road during our ride, a distance of some ten Irish miles, and the town of Castle-blaney seemed almost deserted as we entered it. Those we met did not offer the usual salutation, and a dark scowling air of triumph was expressed upon their faces as we passed. We rode straight to the hotel, where we dismounted, and gave our horses to the hostler, taking care to withdraw our pistols from the holsters, lest they should be tampered with whilst we were absent.

On entering the hotel we asked for our friend, and found that he was still alive, though wholly unconscious. His relations had been summoned, but had not yet arrived. His clerk, taking a small roll of paper out of his pocket, unfolded it, and exhibited a handful of bones, which he told us were shattered fragments of the skull which the doctor had succeeded in removing from his unfortunate patient

As usual in such cases, we found that we were wholly useless. A set determination existed among the peasantry to give no information whatever; we were told, falsely as was afterwards proved, that no one had seen the deed except the assassins themselves; that 'the police were on the alert,' as usual, but that no information existed which afforded the slightest clue to the motive for the murder, and still less to the detection of the murderers.

We were pressed to go up-stairs and see Mr. Bateson in his agony; but this we declined. A sickening feeling stole over our hearts, though unacknowledged by any of us, that we might soon perhaps be in the same state ourselves, and delicacy forbade any useless intrusion on so painful and sorrowful a scene. He breathed his last soon after we left the hotel.

With hearts sad, shocked, and angry, we mounted our horses to ride home. It was a bright moonlight night; and though we knew we were in imminent danger, and likely to be waylaid on our return, as our destination was known to all, yet I well remember as we trotted briskly on in the sharp and fresh night air, how our spirits gradually rose within us, and a reaction of almost joyous lightheartedness came over each; and, as our horses bounded towards home, we mutually, though silently, determined to throw off the painful feelings which had so lately filled our minds and pressed so heavily on our spirits. Like soldiers in the midst of a campaign, we talked and laughed and planned for the future, as if the certainty of long and happy lives lay before us. And yet that very night, as I afterwards ascertained, we were waylaid by the sworn assassins; and had not two mounted police been sent out to meet us, through the forethought and care of Mr. Barry, the sub-inspector of the force, to escort us home as the night closed in, a fierce attack would certainly have been made upon our lives.

But just as we rode up, and parties were separating for the attack, we were [illegible]
served by two mounted police within a few hundred yards of where they
[illegible]

One of the assassins afterwards confessed to me that 'their blood was up at the boys in Castleblaney being before them in having Bateson down, and Trench still upon the walk,' and that they were determined 'to chance their lives,' and fire a volley on us as we came home that night. But just as we rode up and they were preparing for the attack, we were joined by the mounted police within a few hundred yards of the very spot where they were lying in wait!

We reached our homes in safety and in perfect ignorance of the imminent danger we had escaped.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALICE McMAHON.

I WAS sitting in my office one evening in the month of December 1851, and shortly after the occurrence narrated in the preceding chapter, when an incident took place so characteristic of the people and of the times, that it may be worth recording.

It had been an 'office day,' and a great variety of cases had come before me for adjudication. I was tired, and weary of my work; when just as darkness closed in, a young woman presented herself and requested a private audience. Her appearance was not altogether that of an ordinary peasant. She wore a neat modern bonnet, a veil so thick that I could not see her features, and her dress in other respects showed symptoms not only of comfort but of taste.

No sooner had I taken her into my private office, than to my utter astonishment she dropped down upon her knees before me, and placing her hands in an attitude of agonised supplication, she exclaimed:

'Oh Mr. Trench, what shall I do, what shall I do! you only can help me!'

I was shocked and distressed at the attitude assumed towards me; and insisting upon her rising at once, which she seemed somewhat unwilling to do, I placed her on a chair and requested her to let me know her name and what it was that distressed her.

She appeared very uneasy lest our conversation should be overheard, and went herself to the door to make sure it was closed and that no one was listening outside; then, having in some degree recovered her composure, she said, 'My name is Alice M°Mahon—though that does not matter much; but oh! tell me, Sir, isn't it true that the police have a warrant in their hands to arrest Ned Cunningham?'

'Really,' replied I, 'I am not sure; I don't recollect at present any man of that name for whose apprehension I have issued a warrant.'

'Mr. Trench, I may as well tell you the real truth, and when you know all, perhaps you will tell me what I had best do—for God knows I am fairly broken-hearted. Ned and I were to be married soon. My people were not satisfied with the match, for they always held their heads high amongst the neighbours; and Ned had only a few acres of land, and they said he wasn't good enough for me. God help me! if they knew what a poor miserable unhappy girl I am now, they would think anything good enough for the like of me. Well, as I was saying, my people weren't satisfied at the match, and mother was stiff and distant, and father swore he would never consent; and at last they made me promise to tell Ned I would never see him any more.'

'Was that Ned Cunningham a fine tall young man with sandy hair, and as active a chap as any in the barony?'

'The same,' said she; 'I knew well you must have known him for reasons there is no use in telling now.'

'I know him well,' replied I; 'that is, he was pointed out to me more than once; but his character is none of the best, and I fear he is in danger of being arrested even now.'

'I know it,' said the girl calmly, 'I know it but too well. But let me tell you my story—it won't keep you very long; and then you can do what you please.'

Here she took off her bonnet quietly, and laid it on the table beside her; then for the first time, by the light of a lamp which was burning, I saw the face of my visitor. She appeared to be about twenty or twenty-one years of age. Her countenance was decidedly prepossessing, but of a cast which is generally termed interesting rather than strikingly handsome. Her features were very regular, and she had a quiet composed manner, and a clear calm eye, which indicated a mind not devoid of thoughtfulness as well as courage. Her figure was slight and feminine, rather below the average height, but singularly well-proportioned, and—if I may use the term—lady-like. All her motions were graceful, and appeared to be those of a girl who had been educated far beyond the ordinary average of an Irish peasant.

Her manner was so calm, that I could scarcely believe it to be the same figure who, a few minutes before, had been kneeling in the attitude of supplication; and when she laid her bonnet on the table, and pushed back her hair from her pale and somewhat careworn cheek, I thought I had seldom seen a more interesting girl.

'I knew well,' she continued, 'that you must have heard something about Ned; but now just listen to me till I tell you what you never heard from his enemies. I was telling you a while ago, that I promised father to let Ned know I would never see him more: so one night about a month ago we met as usual: he never could stay long away; for when his work was over, he was always coming about the house where he thought he'd see me. And then we'd have a little walk together, and Ned was always pressing me to go away with him; but I never would, for I told him

whatever I did I would never bring disgrace upon my family. Well, one night Ned came as usual, and after we had walked a bit in the moonlight—"Ned," says I, "father says we must never marry, and that I'm not to be walking or talking with you any more." Ned stopped short and stared in my face by the moonlight—"You're not in airnest, Alice," said he, "you're surely not in airnest: I knew they were never free to like the match; but sure you're not in airnest that you're not to walk with me or see me more?" "Ned," says I, "I am in airnest: father and mother was always good to me, and I can't go against their wishes now—and I fear I must break off with you." "Alice, you were never fond of joking—is it truth you're telling me?" "It is, Ned," says I, as quiet to him as I am this minute. "I believe it's *yourself* that don't care for me," says Ned angrily; "but any way you would never say what you now do, unless you were in airnest. The boys were often wanting me to join them, but I always refused up to this. Alice—though I never told them so—it was for *your* sake I refused; but now I'll refuse no longer. There's to be a meetin' to-night, and I'll go straight and join them that's bound to give freedom to Ireland."

'"Oh Ned, Ned," says I, "for God's sake don't join the bloody Ribbonmen that's bringing all this trouble on the country, and some of them will be sure to suffer yet. Oh, Ned dear, don't join them! whatever you do, don't join them; they'll surely bring you to the gallows!" "What matter what they bring me to," says he, "when you draw off from me. Alice, you are the only living being I care for in the world. I've neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister; but I thought I had *you* for my own, and that you would soon be my wife. And now you tell me that's all over; and what can I do better than join them that's striving to free our country?—But come away with me now,

Alice dear," says he—"come off with me this minute, and I'll do whatever you bid me, and never take the oath, let them all talk as they will."'

Here she stopped for a few moments in her story: her face grew paler than before, and her eyes filled with tears; then, after a few convulsive efforts to overcome her feelings, she continued—

'I think I would have gone with him that very minute, for I loved Ned dearly; but just then, father came to the door, and called out to know what was I doing so long out of the house. So I told him I was coming in; and giving one last look at Ned, I said, "Ned, don't ask me; I can't do it." "Very well," said Ned, "mind you have refused, and you are not the girl to refuse unless you meant it—good bye, *I'll join the boys to-night!*" And he was gone across the ditch by my side before I could say another word.'

'I fear,' said I, 'he has kept to his threat; for I know he is one of the Ribbonmen now.'

'I will not deny it,' replied she calmly; 'I knew well your honour knew it, and that is what brings me to you here to-night.'

'And what do you want me to do?' asked I.

'The police have nothing against him yet,' she replied; 'they have a warrant in their hands to arrest him, but that is only for some assault—as they call it—which one of his enemies swore against him. He has done nothing yet with the boys which could bring him into trouble, except taking the dreadful oath. But oh! Sir, I'll tell you what I dare scarcely tell to mortal man—he is *on for the next job.*'

'On for the next job!' said I; 'what do you mean?'

'Your honour knows well what I mean,' replied the girl calmly.

'Do you mean,' said I, 'that he is to murder the next

man that those blood-thirsty villains condemn to die?—perhaps it may be myself?'

'There is no fear of his hurting a hair of your honour's head,' said she steadily. 'They tried him about that, but he was near killing the man that said it to him, and they never spoke to him of it since; but they have put him on for the next job barrin' yourself; and now that he is regularly sworn in, he can't refuse.'

'Well,' said I, 'and what do you propose that I should do?'

'I'll tell you, Sir,' replied she. 'Ned came to me the other night; I was sitting up late, thinking. Father and mother had gone to bed; but I said I wanted to sew a bit, so I sat up thinking over the fire. After a while I heard a tap at the window, and then a low whistle, which I knew well was Ned's. So I made no noise nor stir, but I just put out the candle as if I was going to bed, and then went to the door and opened it, and sure enough there was Ned before me. Oh Sir, you wouldn't know him he was so changed in that one month. It was full moon again, and when he turned to look at me the moon shone bright upon him; and it wasn't Ned at all, but some ghost that was like him, I saw. "Ned," says I, "is that you?" "It is," says he, and his very voice sounded different from what it used. Well, I was glad to see him anyhow; so I took his hand in mine, and says I, "Ned, what has happened, for you're not the same as you were?" "How could I," says he, "when you told me you wouldn't see me any more?" "Ned," says I, "don't deceive me, that's not it, there is worse than that come over you." "Nothing could be worse than that," says he. "Ned, you *must* tell me. I know you well, and I know there is worse than the loss of me upon you now." "Well, Alice," says he, "and if there is, it was the loss of you that drove me to it." "I won't deny but that might

be true too," says I; "but, Ned, you must tell me what is the matter now. Are you sworn in?" "I am," says Ned, "though the bloody villains would murder me if they knew I told you." "You have done nothing yet, Ned?" says I. "No, Alice," says he; "*but I'm on for the next job, after Trench.*" Well, Sir, what came over me then I don't know; but I lost my sight and my senses, and I never knew where I was or what had happened, till I found myself down at the well below the house, and Ned pouring water on my face with his two hands. He looked so terrible when I first opened my eyes, that he brought me to my senses quick enough; and in a minute all that had happened was before me. "Ned," says I, "break off with them villains, and *I'll go with you where you please.*" "My God!" cried Ned, "why didn't you say that before? I'm sworn in now, and I must be true to my country; though it's little of their country that them bloody villains thinks. But I'm sworn in now, and I'm bound to obey."

"Ned," says I, "you shall do no such thing—I'll go with you where you go; I'll leave father and mother now. You know, Ned, I always loved you; and what's the use of love if it wouldn't stick by a friend in trouble? You must leave the country, Ned, and that at once; and I'll go with you, and they'll never know where we are. Let us go off at once to America." Well, Sir, Ned was silent for a minute, and then he says, "Alice dear, don't ask me to peach, or tell on one of them, for I'll never do it—no, not even to win you." "I'll never ask you, Ned," says I; "only come away and leave them there, before any job turns up that will ruin your soul and body." "There is a warrant out against me," says Ned, "for a stroke I hit another boy a few days ago; it's in the Police Barrack this minute, and they will be out searching for me soon. And if they arrest me on this warrant, I'll be kept to see if

they can get anything else against me, and maybe something bad will happen before it's all over."

'"Will you come away if I get the warrant stopped?" says I. "Alice," says he, "I'll have to break a solemn oath if I do; but it's better to be damned for breaking an oath to those bloody villains than for killing some one; so if I'm not taken this week, I'll go, if you will come with me!"'

She stopped and looked at me. 'Well,' said I, 'and what do you want me to do?'

'I want you to stop the warrant just for one week,' said she: 'he has done nothing yet; the warrant is only for cutting another boy's head, which did him no great harm; and moreover that same boy deserved it well. But if Ned stays in the country, he'll surely do whatever the bloody villains he's joined with bid him. Keep back the warrant for one week, and you'll save his soul and body.'

The poor girl could hold out no longer, but dropping on her knees before me again, she put her hands to her eyes, and as the tears streamed through her fingers, she sobbed out, almost choking with agitation,—'Oh Sir, save him if you can! save poor Ned, who never would hurt the hair of a child's head if he was not sworn to it by them terrible men.'

I have seldom felt in a greater difficulty. Here was a man who it was now acknowledged was a sworn Ribbonman, and I was asked to hold back the warrant for his arrest so as to enable him to leave the country and escape the law. True, but then I reflected, he had done nothing yet as a Ribbonman that the law could lay hold of, except taking the oath. I fully believed the weeping girl before me, that they were deeply attached to each other, and I also believed her statement that in a moment of anger at her father's rejecting his suit, he had joined the Ribbonmen, and was sworn in to their bloody code. She saw in a moment that

I hesitated between what at first sight appeared to be my duty as a magistrate, and my desire to save her lover from crime and death. I have said she was educated above her class, and she perceived my difficulty in a moment.

'Oh Sir,' said she, rising gently from her knees and calming down her countenance again, 'you'll do no wrong in holding back the warrant for a week; though Ned is sworn in, he has done no bad act yet; and surely it is better to save him now, than to hang him after he has committed some terrible crime. I know him well: he is as daring when his blood is up, as he is gentle and kind in heart; he would not hurt a little child. But they have told him it's for the good of Ireland; and when he gets warmed with that, he'd kill a hundred men.'

'And does he really believe it is for the good of Ireland,' I asked indignantly, 'to waylay and murder some unfortunate man who has never injured or wronged him?'

'That's a long story, Sir,' replied she; 'and maybe you wouldn't understand it all if I told you. But they think the English have no right to the land at all, and they hope to get it all back again yet, if they can only frighten you—and such as you—out of it, and kill any of themselves that takes the land over the old stock's head; and they have persuaded Ned it's all right—or at least they were near doing so. But I think he hates them in his heart; and though nothing would make him come out and inform against them—and I would be the last to ask him—yet if he can only slip away quietly it will be all well yet, and I have promised to go with him.'

'Have you money enough to go?' I asked.

'I'm sorry to tell you I have not,' replied she; 'father has plenty, and would give me what I wanted if it was for anything else; but I dare not ask him for it now. Ned, too, has been idling and drinking with those blackguards,

and they took care to get out of him all he had. I must trust to your honour to give us the means, and that is another thing I came for.'

'Well,' I said at last: 'it is a serious thing, and a great responsibility to take upon myself to hold back the warrant in such a case as this; but considering that Ned has done nothing yet except to take the oath, and we have nothing to prove against him as a Ribbonman, I think that if I could see him myself, and make sure of what his real intentions are, I would manage to hold back the warrant, so that it should not be executed for a few days at all events.'

'May God bless you, Sir! may God for ever bless you!' cried she; but suddenly checking herself, she added in a frightened tone—'But did your honour say you wanted to see Ned yourself?'

'Yes,' replied I, 'certainly; I will do nothing unless I see him myself. He may have deceived you, and sent you on this mission only to enable him more securely to perpetrate some dreadful crime.'

'Ned is as surely true to his word as your honour would be yourself,' replied the girl, a little indignantly. 'But after all,' added she gently, 'why should you not see him? I am sure I can trust you to take no advantage of Ned. He is not far from the town this minute; I could go for him, for I know where he is, and he would meet you anywhere you please.'

'If I meet him, it must be alone,' said I; 'I cannot have you with me.'

'Just as your honour pleases,' replied the girl.

'Very well. Let Ned meet me at the back of the Gallows-hill, near the old windmill, at eight o'clock this evening. It will be dark then, and no one will know anything about it.'

The girl looked at me very steadily for a few moments,

evidently endeavouring to pierce into my inmost thoughts, and then quietly taking her bonnet from the table, she said in a calm voice, 'I am sure and certain your honour would not deal unfairly with us. Ned shall meet you at the time and place you say, for I know well he will do whatever I bid him now.'

She put on her bonnet, drew down the veil carefully over her face, so that it would be impossible to recognise her features, and left the office by a private door.

No sooner had she gone than I began to feel I had made a somewhat foolish assignation, and I felt a little uneasy as to the issue. However, the girl had trusted me, and I resolved to trust her, and, come what would, to keep the appointment.

I ate a hasty dinner, and having carefully examined a brace of double-barrelled pistols which I usually carried with me, I muffled myself up in a large great-coat, and walked out unobserved into the street. There was no gas in those days in Carrickmacross, and the night being cold and cloudy, I was not recognised by the few passers-by I met. The 'Gallows-hill' is a vacant unfrequented height at the back of the Court-house at Carrickmacross; and on such a night and at such an hour, there seemed to be no danger of interruption. I will not deny that my heart beat a little more rapidly than the up-hill walk would warrant, as I ascended the dreary, waste-looking grassy hill on the top of which stands the windmill. However, I walked on steadily; and holding one of my pistols cocked in my hand, but concealed inside my great-coat pocket, I found myself at the place of appointment. I could see no one; but having given a low whistle, a form emerged from inside the old windmill walls, and I stood face to face with Ned.

I was the first to speak.

'You have come here at Alice's request?'

'I have; and she tells me she has let you know all. It is dangerous work for me to be here; but I'm sure your honour won't betray me.'

'You need not fear my betraying you,' replied I; 'but you have entered on a fearful course; and unless I am satisfied that Alice's story is true—that you are not deceiving her, and that you are really willing to leave at once for America—I shall certainly think it my duty to do my utmost to have you brought to justice.'

'And what makes you doubt Alice's story? do you think she would deceive you?'

'Certainly not,' replied I; 'my only doubt is, whether you are not deceiving her.'

'Did she throw any doubt upon that herself?'

'She did not; she firmly believes every word you told her, or she would not have brought me to meet you here to-night: she is ready and willing to go any where with you, provided you will only leave the country at once.'

'Alice was always true and good,' replied Ned in a softened tone; 'she never deceived me, and I never deceived her. Your honour knows I am on for the next job; but, please God, I'll disappoint those blood-thirsty villains; and if you can only stop the warrant for three days more, I'll be gone for ever from Ireland, and Alice will go along with me.'

'I believe you,' returned I—'I believe you are telling me the truth; I do not think you would have ventured to meet me here, if you had not intended to be true. I understand you have little or no money: I will give Alice what is necessary. Good-bye; it is dangerous our talking here, as the police are on the patrol, and I could not save you if they came upon you. I will endeavour to hold back

the warrant for three days more; so make the best of your time, and above all, be kind and good to the girl Alice, for she loves you dearly.'

'I would give my heart's blood for her,' said Ned in an altered tone. 'She has saved my body and soul. I suppose your honour would not shake the hand of a man like me, but if you would I'd be thankful.'

'Freely,' I replied; and I held out my hand to him at once. He shook it warmly.

'God bless you, Sir,—I dare not and cannot say more.'

'I wish you a good life and a happy one with Alice,' replied I.

He turned rapidly away, disappeared behind the ruined windmill, and was gone.

I returned to the town, and calling at the Police Barrack I expressed a wish to one of the policemen in authority that the warrant should not be executed against Ned Cunningham for three or four days more. The policeman touched his hat in acquiescence, but said,

'I fear, Sir, he is a bad boy.'

'I know it,' replied I, 'but I have reasons for what I do.'

The policeman bowed.

The scene I have described happened on a Thursday. On the following Saturday Alice came into my office again. A look of intelligence from her was enough to make me take her again into my private sitting-room.

'Well, Alice, is all ready?'

'He is outside, Sir,' she replied; 'he said he would never leave Ireland without one word more of blessing to you for your goodness. He has a new suit of clothes and all; but he was afraid to put it on, for fear the boys would find out what he is at. But our passage is taken, for he borrowed a few pounds from a neighbour, who will pay himself out of the crops Ned leaves behind him; so we are off on

Sunday to Dundalk, we will get married on Monday, and sail on Tuesday night. God bless you, Sir, you have saved his soul and body.'

I put a ten pound note into Alice's hand, and went out to a back lane near the office, whither she had preceded me. There was Ned. He did not come near me; but taking off his hat, he bowed almost to the ground, his countenance beaming with joy, as he saw Alice coming towards him.

They gave me one parting grateful look, walked rapidly down the lane together, and I saw them no more.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ARREST.

THE murder of Mr. Bateson created a great sensation in the district. He was a gentleman so well known and so universally respected, that a general feeling prevailed that no one could now be safe. The list of landlords and agents who had been murdered or secretly wounded by the hands of the assassins had become seriously large. It was well known also that several gentlemen were under sentence of death—Mr. Morant and myself amongst the number—and a general feeling of the utmost alarm prevailed; the timid fled from the country altogether, whilst the bolder residents never stirred out of their houses unless armed to the teeth and prepared for an attack.

Within a circle of a few miles, four most barbarous outrages had been committed. Mr. Mauleverer, Mr. Bateson, and Mr. Coulter * had been murdered, whilst others had been attacked and severely wounded. Matters seemed to be growing worse instead of better. Threatening notices and warnings became numerous. I received several of both kinds myself,† and feelings of deep animosity were rapidly

* Mr. Coulter was murdered at Hack-bulls-cross on May 2, 1851.

† The following specimens I happen to have retained. I give them verbatim :—

'Take Notice. The Writer

Cautions Wm. St. Trench, Esq. from going unguarded at any Time. This is not an Idle Notice. It's from a sincere Friend and Obliged Tenant.'

Another notice ran thus :—

springing up between the peasantry and the resident gentry.

In the midst of this state of things, it was announced by the stipendiary magistrate of the district that the murderers of Mr. Bateson had been arrested; they had been identified by parties who, having been hidden at the time in a field close by, had actually seen them do the deed; and that the crime could now be fully proved against the prisoners.

Under these circumstances, the Government resolved to issue a special commission, mainly to try the murderers

'NOTICE.

'All Landlords and Bailiffes may look out in this part Countery, for the will get the same as that of Beatson, and Trench may look out, for he will get the same as Beatson with Gun and Bludgeon.'

The original of this notice was posted somewhere in the neighbourhood of Carrickmacross, and underneath the copy forwarded to me was a note from the sub-inspector of police:

'February 18, 1852.

'DEAR SIR,—The above is a true copy, and I am happy to say everything is quiet since the notice was found. (!)

'Yours faithfully,

'THOMAS R. BARRY.'

Another notice, of a rather curious nature, was also sent to me by Mr. Barry:

'NOTICE.

'Take notice, good friends and neighbours, and do not censure agents, for possitively they must show either waste land or rent, and never shall there be an Agent shot any more. But every person who shall occupy said place without the blessing of the family who was dispossessed of it shall mark the consequences of the family who shall attempt to dwell. This is a notice from the Lady of Cross. God bless the Queen!'

The latter part of the above is rather obscurely expressed; but it means that any tenant who should dare to take land from which any other tenant had been evicted for non-payment of rent should 'mark the consequences,' i.e. be 'shot' instead of the agent.

Perhaps I may be permitted to take this opportunity of bearing testimony to the active, zealous, and efficient services of Mr. Barry, then sub-inspector of the police of the district of Carrickmacross. His services in those difficult and dangerous times deserve my warmest approbation. He has, since then, been most deservedly promoted to the office of county inspector of one of the northern counties.

of Mr. Bateson, and in the hope of striking terror into the Ribbon Confederacy by a severe and immediate example. There were also some minor cases of agrarian outrage to be disposed of on the same occasion.

A Special Commission—a kind of emergency assize, assembled for the purpose of trying cases of a peculiar nature, which are either so numerous or so pressing that they cannot be allowed to wait for the ordinary assizes—is always a serious affair. The gentry and magistrates are summoned from their ordinary avocations to act as grand jurors and jurors. A heavy expense is entailed on the county, and the Commission is never issued unless the Government have good reason to calculate upon some important convictions. The Commission being determined on, Mr. Morant and I were summoned as grand jurors on the occasion.

I shall not readily forget our starting on the journey from Carrickmacross to Monaghan ; the latter is the county town, and is situated about twenty Irish miles from the former. We hired a 'long car'—that is, an outside car on four wheels, long enough to hold several persons on each side, and drawn by two horses. Rumours of the wildest nature were everywhere afloat—that we should be attacked by a large body of Ribbonmen on our way, that our progress would be interrupted in Castleblaney, &c. I confess I scarcely believed all this ; the threatened attack was of too open a nature for Ribbonmen. All parties, however, were so much excited that there was no saying what might happen ; and we determined to prepare for the worst.

Our pistols and guns were accordingly fresh cleaned and loaded ; one or two of my young friends proposed to accompany us on the car, as they said, 'to see the fun ;' two sub-constables were told off to attend us as far as Castleblaney, and two mounted policemen, fully equipped, were

ordered to ride beside us; and in this state of preparation for war we started from Carrickmacross.

There is a winding pass on the way between Carrickmacross and Castleblaney, with high banks and rocks on either side, which is singularly well suited for an attack. We used to call it the 'Khyber Pass,' from the peculiar manner which those passing through it on the road were in the power of an enemy on the rocks above. Through this pass we rode slowly, our pistols cocked and our double-barrelled guns resting upon our knees. All, however, went off quietly, and we arrived at Monaghan without any incident of importance.

The Commission was duly opened. Mr. Brewster, now Lord Chancellor of Ireland, was then Attorney-General, and he made, as he never failed to do, an admirable speech, in which he sketched the terrible state of the country, neither life nor property being for one moment secure, owing to the fearful nature of the Ribbon Confederacy; and he called upon the jurors of the county to come forward without fear, favour, or affection, and put down by an impartial verdict the reign of terror under which the country was suffering.

Two prisoners indicted for the murder of Mr. Bateson were now brought forward; they were duly arraigned, and asked were they guilty or not guilty.

'Not guilty,' declared each of them in a full and firm voice.

The jury list was called over, and many were 'challenged,' and bid to 'stand aside,' both by the prisoners and the Crown. At last a jury was chosen, and duly sworn to give their verdict 'according to the evidence, without fear, favour, or affection.'

'There will be no conviction,' remarked a grand juror to me.

'Why not?' I asked.

'Because,' replied he, 'there is a man on that jury who will never find those men guilty.'

'I trust that is not so—that is, if their guilt can be substantiated.'

'There will be no conviction!' he replied.

The trial proceeded: and the witnesses in the clearest manner detailed the whole of the terrible events of the murder, as they have already been described. Nothing could be more accurate or circumstantial than their narrative. They had been working in a field close by at the time, and seeing Mr. Bateson walking slowly towards them, they stooped down to hide, not wishing him to see them. Whilst thus hiding, without any express object, as they stated, they saw the prisoners steal up behind Mr. Bateson. One of them entered into conversation with him, and the other put the pistol to the back of his neck, just below the ear, and fired. Both then attacked him when he fell; they beat out his brains, and then made off across the fields.

There was some little hesitation about whether a third party had not been seen at a distance; but this did not seem materially to affect the evidence as concerned the two prisoners at the bar.

The witnesses to this terrible scene declared that for some time they did not know what to do. They were themselves afraid of being murdered if they informed; and they dreaded to keep such a fearful secret, lest they should be accused of being parties to the crime. Whilst thus in doubt, they saw placards posted all over the county offering a large reward to anyone who would give information concerning the murder, and prosecute the guilty parties to conviction. They no longer hesitated; but went secretly to the stipendiary magistrate, told him the whole story, gave him intelligence as to where the parties who had done the deed were to be found, identified them fully

to the satisfaction of the stipendiary magistrate, and now appeared in court to prosecute them to conviction.

I watched the trial closely as it went on; and it struck me that when the witnesses were called on to identify the prisoners, and to put the long white wand or rod of the crier upon the head of each, there was much uncertainty and hesitation in their manner, and so very strong was this impression, that I said to one of the grand jurors who was near me at the time—

'I don't like the manner in which the witnesses identified those prisoners: it was by no means satisfactory to my mind; and I should be sorry to be one of the petty jury, to give a verdict of guilty in such a case.'

'I never heard clearer evidence in my life,' said my companion, 'and I wonder how you can doubt it for a moment.'

This matter was afterwards a good deal discussed amongst the magistrates and grand jurors; and I found the prevailing opinion was so strong against the prisoners, that throwing a doubt upon the case seemed almost to be considered as siding with the Ribbon Conspiracy, and therefore as my opinion in the matter could be of no avail one way or the other (the case being now in the hands of the petty jury), I held my peace.

The trial did not last very long. The judge charged the jury fairly and impartially, observing that if they believed the statement of the witnesses, there could be but one verdict given; but at the same time he went closely into the evidence, and recapitulated all that had passed when the prisoners were identified before the magistrate. The jury retired; and after some hours' absence, returned into court, declaring through their foreman that there was not the slightest chance of their agreeing.

It was not of course openly announced, but all in court seemed fully to understand that eleven were for a convic-

tion and one only for an acquittal. The jury were sent back again to their room, as is usual on such occasions ; but they returned after some hours' absence only to repeat their decision. And at length a doctor having been called, he declared that the lives of some of the jury would be endangered if they were kept any longer locked up in confinement without food—which is the law on such occasions. They were therefore called into court, and dismissed by the judge without any verdict being obtained. The prisoners were remanded again to their cells to stand over for a fresh trial at the next ordinary assizes of the county.

It was well for the cause of justice that no verdict was obtained on this occasion; for it was afterwards clearly proved that the prisoners then at the bar *had not committed the murder*—that the witnesses who swore so positively against them were either mistaken as to the identity of the parties, or swore falsely to obtain the reward. And thus, by the so-called 'obstinacy' of the one juror alluded to—the only one who saw the real truth of the case—the lives of these men were saved. The narrow escape which these men had of undergoing the fearful penalty of the law for a crime they had not committed, produced an effect on me, and I doubt not on others also, which will not readily be effaced; and shows the caution which is necessary in such matters before a prisoner, especially in times of excitement, be condemned to die.

Before the next assizes came round, these prisoners were released from confinement; three others were arrested, charged with the same offence, their crime was brought home to them beyond all reasonable doubt, and they were executed with the full belief of the population in their guilt.

But I must now revert to a strange scene which was being enacted at *the very time* that the Special Commission

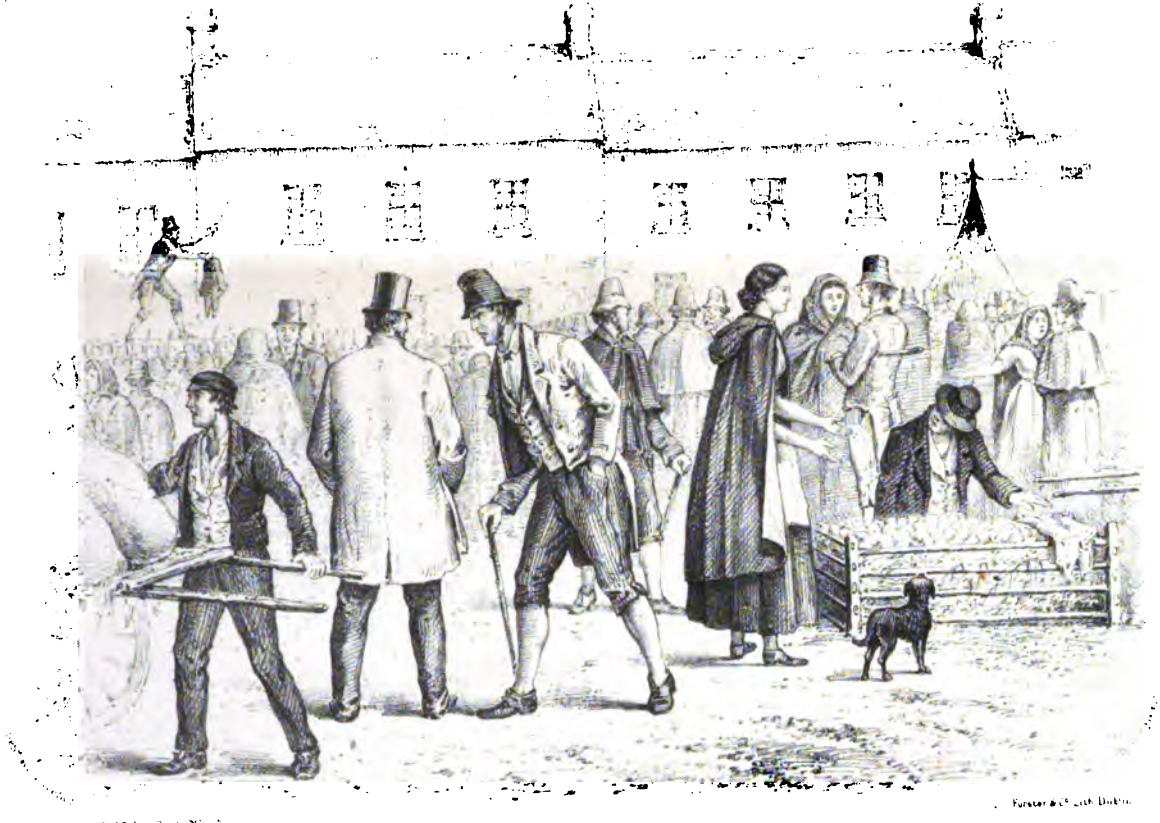
was sitting in all its formidable array at the county town of Monaghan.

On the day following that on which Mr. Morant and I had made our journey in such preparation for battle from Carrickmacross to Monaghan, the trusty and well-known Paddy M°Ardle, bailiff of the Bath Estate, was walking through the town of Carrickmacross, crowded with people as it usually is on a market-day, when a man came up close beside him, and said in a low voice,

'Paddy, you are a corpse if you go home to-night!'

Paddy M°Ardle was, and is still, a man of considerable firmness of nerve, and had gone through many dangers on the Bath Estate. He could 'handle a shillelagh' and 'clear the fair' as well as the stoutest Ribbonman of them all. He was of a powerful frame and build, and yet as active as a wild cat upon his legs; and few could ride across the country, whenever occasion required, better than Paddy M°Ardle.

But Paddy had other qualifications beside these. Born amongst the people, and of the people, he understood them thoroughly and well. He was up to all their sharpest tricks, and could interpret a nod or a wink more quickly and accurately than anyone I ever met. He understood every turn and twist of the wiliest neighbours he had; and they were all well aware that he did so. But with all these qualities, I ever found Paddy brave, honourable, and true; faithful to me and kind towards the people; never bringing in small tales or stories against anyone, and always giving 'the good word' and doing the 'kind thing' when he could, even towards those who were his bitterest enemies. He was true in his allegiance to his employers, stout in heart and ready of hand, and as such, a most important party for the Ribbon Confederacy to get out of the way of its designs.



"Paddy, you are a corpse if you go home to-night!"

Such was the man who now heard in a low but clear and startling voice,

'Paddy, you are a corpse if you go home to-night!'

Paddy's nerves by no means failed him at such an announcement. He 'pulled up short,' as he expressed it to me afterwards, gave a rapid glance to see who had 'given him the word'; and averting his face in a moment again, as if talking to some one else, he said,

'Do you mean *myself* in airnest, or is it Mr. Trench you mean?'

'I mean *you—you are a dead corpse if you stir out of the town this night.*'

'Tear an' ages!' muttered Paddy; 'take a turn through the market that no one will see you, and meet me again at the office.'

The man nodded intelligence; and both went their ways for the time, having scarcely looked in each other's faces whilst they were holding this singular conference. Paddy met him again at the office door.

'In with you,' whispered he, 'I want to talk to you inside.'

The man sauntered slowly in as if on the most ordinary business, whilst Paddy—taking a turn through the market as if to show there was no appointment between them—at length followed him into the office of the Bath Estate. He beckoned him into a private room, where at once all his affected calmness vanished, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead he said,

'Is it truth you're telling me, or do you only want to frighten me? Do you mean to say that the boys are lying in wait for me this minute?'

'As true as you're a living man now, ye will be a corpse if ye go home to-night,' said the man solemnly again. 'They were looking for Trench before, but now they have

turned upon ye; and oh! Paddy dear, mind yourself or they'll shoot ye as dead as a wild duck.'

'Tear an' ages!' ejaculated Paddy again, 'and where-abouts are they lying now?'

'I dar'n't tell ye,' replied the man. 'They'd have my life —if I had a thousand—if it was known I told ye what I done; and if they were took now, it would be known that I had done it, and nothing could save me.'

'It's tar'ble news!' said Paddy, as he reflected for a moment. 'What will I do at all?'

'Stay in town to-night,' replied his friend; 'it's your only chance. Say ye were ill and took something, and go home in the morning fair and aisy; for they'll never stay there watching all night.'

'Well, any way, I'm beholden to you,' said Paddy, 'let what will come of it, for I don't think you'd desave me at such a time as this.'

'Go home and try it, if ye doubt me,' answered the man shortly, 'and then ye'll be sure to know whether I tould the truth or not.'

'Faix that's fair,' returned Paddy. 'But I'll just go and talk to Mrs. M°Ardle about it—I came in with her in the gig; and if anyone can give me good advice, she can.'

'Paddy dear,' whispered his friend in a soft conciliatory tone of voice, 'sure ye won't forget me about the little bit of land nigh hand my house that ye know of? it just lies into me neatly you know, and I'd be sorry to lose it for a trifle; and, Paddy dear, mind now ye take care of yourself, for maybe if ye were down there would be no one to spake a kind word for me in the office but yourself, to get the bit of land ye know of.'

'In troth!' replied Paddy, 'but it's well for me that ye wanted that bit of land any how! if it warn't for that same, maybe it's little ye would be warning me about the boys

this blessed night. However, I'll not forget ye if I get over this bout, come what will.'

'Ye are the right sort, Paddy; I knew ye would always stand to a friend.'

A few minutes afterwards Paddy strolled out of the office, as easily and lazily as if the day's work had been pleasantly and well got through, and went slowly down to the inn, where he had appointed his wife to wait for him. The evening was beginning to close in, and he found Mrs. M°Ardle ready to start for home.

Paddy called his wife aside into a private room of the inn where he had put up his horse, and at once related to her the whole story. 'My confidence (as he told me) in her pluck and good sense was unbounded, and why would I keep anything from her?'

'Man alive!' said Paddy to me afterwards, when describing the whole of what had passed, 'sure I know Mrs. M°Ardle well; you'll not believe it, Sir, when I tell you, but never a word of lie in it, if she wouldn't *kill fowl* with the best man of them all!'

'Kill fowl,' said I; 'I dare say she could do it well enough, but what good would that qualification be if you were waylaid by those scoundrel Ribbonmen—she could not cut their throats as easily as those of the ducks and chickens?'

'Ah! sure it's not that I mean at all, Sir!' said Paddy, rather affronted; 'she could *kill fowl* with the best of them. Shoot them, Sir—*shoot wild ducks flying*, so she could, and maybe make a surer offer at it than many a chap that goes out with all them straps on his shoulders and leggins on his thighs.'

It was to this sensible and really stout-hearted woman that Paddy now confided his cares and difficulties. She

waited until he had told her all, and then turning quietly to him she said,

'Well, Mr. M'Ardle, and what do ye intend to do now?'

'Well, ye see,' replied Paddy, 'I just have my own opinion on that same, but I would be glad to have yours also, seeing you came in with me in the gig, and I wouldn't like to do anything in a tarr'ble case like this without your consent.'

'Then I'll tell ye what ye will do, Mr. M'Ardle; get out the gig this minute, and come home like a man, and I'll sit beside ye all the way. We afraid of them chaps! never let such a thing be said in the country. Out with the gig, man, this minute, and get your pistols ready, and see if they dar' attack us.'

Paddy, stout as he was, was scarcely prepared for such an explosion as this. However, he heartily approved of his wife's advice; so he told her to get the gig out, and he would run over to the office a bit, to get his pistols, &c. This, however, was only a ruse; for as soon as he was in the office he briefly recapitulated the whole story to Mr. Lang, my confidential clerk, and he with much promptitude, on application to the sub-inspector, got out four policemen well-armed, who were instructed to walk beside Paddy and his wife, the whole way to their house—nearly four miles from Carrickmacross, and to look behind every hedge and wall along the road which could possibly conceal a Ribbonman, beating the bushes as it were for woodcocks, all along the way.

Mrs. M'Ardle made no objection to this sensible arrangement (though I believe in her heart she considered it a little *infra dig.*), provided Paddy would sit in the gig beside her—just to show they were not afraid. And in this position she and Paddy drove quietly on, greatly to Mrs. M'Ardle's delight—forming a perfect cock-shot to the

Ribbonmen if they chose to fire. Paddy's habitual caution made him mentally question the prudence of his wife's arrangement, but he could not think of opposing it.

The plan, however, was not a bad one, though some courage was required to carry it into effect. Had the police gone far on in advance, the Ribbonmen would have seen them, and probably escaped; but seeing only Paddy and his wife approaching in the gig, their attention was turned to the execution of their murderous designs, and they never saw the police, who were on foot, until it was too late to run away.

The whole party had now proceeded about three miles from Carrickmacross. Darkness had nearly closed in; and though they had entered the rocky defile—before described as having the name of the 'Khyber Pass'—no sign of the Ribbonmen could be found. Here, being undoubtedly the spot of most danger, the police drew in more closely to their companions. Suddenly one of the men exclaimed—

'I think I see something on the rock above, but I can't tell whether it is a bush or a man.'

'Jump over the fence, you and another,' said the leader of the party, 'and see what it can be.'

The object they saw was on a high rock at some distance from them, but completely commanding a view of the road towards Carrickmacross.

The men leapt to the crest of the fence at a bound. It was a high grassy bank with some small whitethorn bushes on the top. And just as they were going to leap down on the other side, they perceived two men crouching close under them, not a yard from the spot where they stood.

'We have them! here they are!' shouted the policemen; and in a moment they were upon them, each gripping his man. Paddy sprang from the gig, and the waylayers were secured almost without a struggle. So sudden and unex-

pected had been the whole thing that they were taken completely by surprise.

Some little delay occurred in handcuffing and securing the prisoners; when at length Mrs. M^cArdle, in a state of high excitement, cried out from the gig,

'Ah then, what are ye all about! shure it isn't going make prisoners of them ye are? I wonder ye would to demane yourselves to do the like. Shoot them, the blood-thirsty villains—weren't they going to shoot us just now? and shure shooting is better for them than hanging any day. Shoot them this minute—why don't ye?'

However sound this advice might have proved for the prevention of such waylayings in future, the police, as well as Paddy, declined to put it into execution. And having handcuffed the prisoners, they proceeded to search the premises around; and close beside where the men had lain they found the celebrated blunderbuss, which had been so frequently described and reported to us as the unfailing weapon by which we were doomed to die. A pistol was also discovered upon the ground close by, and some slugs and gunpowder were found in the pockets of the prisoners.

The whole party now set out for Carrickmacross. Paddy was wild with excitement at having at last caught the Ribbonmen in the very act; though his wife seemed scarcely satisfied that summary justice had not been inflicted upon them by a trial of the powers of their own blunderbuss. The formidable weapon, bright and clean as if fresh out of a royal armoury, was paraded as a trophy of war and carried into Carrickmacross.*

The place which the assassins had selected for the performance of their intended deed of blood had been chosen with singular judgment. The road becomes somewhat

* This celebrated weapon is now in the possession of Mr. Morant, having been given to him by Mr. Barry.

The rocky pass.

ORIGINAL FROM THE UNION

In this wild chasm pervaded the exhaustion and overdistilled avoid

narrow as it enters the rocky defile, and a steep ascent commences at the foot of the pass. About half way up there is a turn in the road, and any person at the upper side of this winding turn, would have an uninterrupted view of the road both above and below it. On this spot the assassins had stationed themselves. They were thus enabled to see the road towards Carrickmacross, and to have a full view of anyone coming towards them along it; whilst the moment the travellers passed the turn, their backs became necessarily exposed to the fire of the assassins, nor would they be able to see their enemies unless they faced completely round.

In this well-chosen position the Ribbonmen had carefully planted themselves; and having cleared a small hole in the bushes, so as to enable them, by raising their heads above the bank, to look up and down the road, they had reason to consider themselves perfectly secure of their victims.

We were not at the time able clearly to ascertain whether the object which appeared to be a figure on the top of the distant rock, and which first attracted the attention of the police, was a man or a bush. There was a bush near the spot which might well be mistaken in the dusk of a winter's evening for a human figure. Paddy maintains that it was a man who had been placed there to watch, so that the assassins could see a signal given from their own side of the bank, and thus give notice of the approach of the gig, without running the risk of discovery by raising their heads above the bank to look out. He has even mentioned to me the name of the man—which was secretly confided to him—but which, for obvious reasons, I think it prudent to omit. It was a wonderful interposition in favour of the intended victims, that the very man (if man it was) employed by the assassins as a watch to secure success in their murderous purpose, should have attracted the attention of

the police, causing them to leap over the fence at the very spot where the Ribbonmen were lying hidden, without having the slightest notion of their immediate proximity. The Ribbonmen considered there had been a wonderful run of ill luck against them all along. There were some who traced all that had happened to other causes rather than ill luck.

I have already stated that on the very day that these reckless Ribbonmen were lying in wait for my friend Paddy M°Ardle, the Special Commission was actually sitting in the county town of Monaghan, trying the supposed murderers of Mr. Bateson. The assassins, I presume, selected this time with a strange mixture of cunning and audacity, because they knew that most of the gentry, as well as the great majority of the police, had left their country quarters for the county town. Thus, when they had done the deed, they believed pursuit would not be so vigorous or immediate as if Mr. Morant and I, and all the police, were on the spot.

Their sudden arrest, however, baffled all their plans. When the blunderbuss was examined, it was found loaded almost to the muzzle, having ten inches of charge in the barrel. A large quantity of powder was rammed down with a piece of paper torn off the corner of a local newspaper of somewhat democratic tendency, a number of leaden slugs and iron nails were then thrust in, and—the paper having, I suppose, run short—the slugs were rammed down with a piece of fustian, evidently torn off some coat. When the police examined the dress of the prisoner named Hodgens, they found on him a fustian garment of the same quality as the piece used for wadding; and on placing the piece to a rent which appeared newly torn in his coat, they found that the wadding fitted precisely into the hole!

Under these circumstances, it was arranged to take the men without delay for trial at the Commission then sitting;

and accordingly they were despatched forthwith from Carrickmacross to Monaghan—Paddy, and the policemen who arrested them, starting simultaneously for the county town.

I was attending in the Court House in Monaghan, when I was informed that my Bailiff, Paddy M Ardle, wanted to see me immediately. I confess I was startled, for I knew that nothing but a matter of importance would have made him leave Carrickmacross at the time. And I was wondering who had last been shot, or what new outrage had been committed, when Paddy rushed up and seized my hand in a state of the highest excitement as he exclaimed,

'By the powers, Sir, we have them at last, blunderbuss and all! we took them in the very act.'

'You have whom?' said I; 'whom did you take, and what blunderbuss have you got?'

'Never you mind, Sir!' cried Paddy; 'we have the right boys this time and no mistake; and sure they can hang them now out of hand as the assizes has the luck to be going on.'

In a few brief words, and with many lively gesticulations, he explained to me the circumstances of the capture of the Ribbonmen. I asked him where the prisoners were, and he told me they were just going to be brought before Colonel Brownrigg* for examination.

I immediately followed Paddy to the place where the parties were assembled in the Crown Solicitor's room. Colonel Brownrigg sat at the table with writing materials before him. The two prisoners were standing in the room guarded by policemen; and lying on the table was the large blunderbuss, which Paddy silently pointed out to me, with delight expressed upon his countenance.

* Now Sir Henry Brownrigg, C.B., late Inspector-General of Police in Ireland.

The policemen who had effected the capture gave their evidence briefly, clearly, and well; and Paddy also told his part of the tale, though with gesticulations and language a little more earnest than the police. The case seemed as clear as noonday as to the circumstances under which the men were found, and as to what had been really their object; but no evidence whatever appeared to warrant a committal for 'conspiracy to murder.' It was true they had been discovered behind the ditch with a blunderbuss close beside them. It was true that Paddy had got *secret* intelligence of their object, and it was quite true also that he fully expected to be 'blown to shivers' as he expressed it, if the parties had not been discovered; but inasmuch as Paddy's informant had not come forward, and consequently there was no witness to prove that the prisoners had ever entered into any conspiracy, Colonel Brownrigg was compelled to content himself with having them indicted for the lesser offence of 'carrying arms in a proclaimed district.' And had it not been that the Barony of Farney was 'proclaimed'* at the time, the men would actually have escaped altogether from want of evidence to prove any conspiracy. They had neither fired a shot, nor committed any overt act which could be construed into an attack upon Paddy M^{c}Ardle or anyone else.

Fortunately, however, the barony being at the time proclaimed, Colonel Brownrigg was enabled fully to commit them for trial for the lesser offence of carrying arms.

'Well, my men,' said Colonel Brownrigg, addressing the prisoners, 'if you wish to say anything in explanation of the circumstances under which you were taken, you can do so now; but I wish duly to caution you that you are not called on to say anything, especially anything which may criminate

* The barony being 'proclaimed,' no one could legally carry arms without a license.

yourselves; but whatever you do say will be taken down in writing and may be produced in evidence against you.'

'I have nothing to say at all about the matter,' replied Thornton, 'except that I don't know "at all at all" what it is ye are all about—going on in this way against two dacent poor innocent boys like us.'

'Oh, indeed!' said Colonel Brownrigg, 'then of course you never saw that blunderbuss before in your lives?'

'Oh, Ned,' exclaimed Thornton to his companion Hodgens, 'that's a blunderbuss! Well now I often heerd tell of a blunderbuss,' continued he, stooping down towards the weapon to view it with the most intense interest as a rare curiosity, 'and I never seen one before. Oh, Ned, look how bright it is, and the big barrel of it! well, well, now, but I'm glad I seen a blunderbuss at last!'

The colonel was a little taken aback by this entirely new light thrown upon the transaction; so he said somewhat stiffly,

'You have heard, sir, what the policeman has sworn—that you and your companion were taken with arms in your possession in a proclaimed barony, and you must be sent to trial for this offence forthwith.'

'Bedad then, your honour,' replied Thornton with as innocent a face as before, 'the policeman never swore anything of the sort. Why would he, the dacent man? He leapt over the ditch sure enough, and he found him and me quietly down there mindin' our business; and after a while, more of them polis came, and left one thing or another near where we were—that same bright blunderbuss I suppose among the rest, and now they want to make believe it was *we* had the blunderbuss! sure they will tell you themselves that they never found us with arms in our possession at all.'

'Oh, indeed!' observed the colonel, 'this is quite a new view of the matter—and pray would you have any objection

to say what business you were about at that time of night, in that remarkable position?'

'Not in the laste,' replied the prisoner, looking a little sheepish and modest, 'only maybe your honour wouldn't be pleased: but sure there's many a time a poor man might hide himself behind a bank of a ditch, and needn't be called on this way to account for his conduct as if he was a robber.'

'Take those men away,' said Colonel Brownrigg, 'and let them be sent up for trial forthwith!'

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONFESSION.

THE arrest of the two conspirators created quite a sensation in the town of Monaghan, and was a most agreeable surprise to the officers of the Crown, who, suspecting that the jury were not likely to agree to a verdict in Mr. Bateson's case, became uneasy lest the Special Commission should be entirely barren of results.

Thornton and Hodgens were accordingly put at once upon their trial. They were indicted for unlawfully carrying arms in a proclaimed district; and notwithstanding the earnest protestations of innocence on the part of our ingenious friend Thornton—who insisted that he had been in the 'Khyber Pass' without any evil intent, and that the police themselves had left the blunderbuss lying close to the spot where he lay—they were both speedily convicted and sentenced to the utmost penalty of the law allowed for this offence—namely, two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

Thornton declared 'they might as well hang him at once as give him two years of hard labour, for he never could stand labour at all, let alone two years of it inside a gaol;' but the judge was inexorable, and the prisoners were removed and sent to Mountjoy Prison near Dublin.

Some other cases were then disposed of; the supposed murderers of Mr. Bateson were remanded to take their trial at the next assizes, and the Special Commission was closed.

The result of the Commission was not upon the whole

considered favourable to the peace of the district. The marvellous recklessness and audacity of men who could deliberately select the very day when the supposed murderers of Mr. Bateson were being tried for their lives at a special commission, as the best and safest for them to endeavour to commit another murder of equal atrocity, struck everyone as a remarkable instance of the little effect the fear of the law or the risk of penal consequences seemed to produce on these hired assassins. And though Paddy M^c^Ardle was highly delighted, and I myself was not a little pleased, that the parties who had been specially engaged for our destruction were at last captured, yet we all returned to our homes by no means feeling that much additional security had been acquired through any wholesome terror inspired by the Special Commission.

In some degree, however, I now felt entitled to relax the incessant vigilance which I had so long deemed it necessary to observe. I was sure that for a time at least my life was not in danger. New arrangements would have to be organised and new assassins hired before any serious attack could be made upon me. I was well aware that my intended murder was not the result of the anger or passion of any individual, or of any number of individuals, who fancied they had been injured by me, but rather that it was a general precautionary measure deliberately undertaken to prevent any person hereafter enforcing the payment of rents, or depriving the tenants of the land which they had so long held practically free of rent. Under these peculiar circumstances, I felt certain that no sudden or immediate attempt was likely to be made upon my life.

Matters were thus resting for a time—the baffled Ribbonmen not knowing exactly what steps to take next—when I was privately informed that Thornton had 'peached' in prison, that he could not stand the hardship and vexation

of constant labour, and that, sooner than undergo the remainder of his sentence, he was prepared to betray his accomplice.

I was not in the secrets of the law officers of the Crown, and I have but little knowledge as to the means by which these matters are brought about. A '*reward*,' as such, cannot be offered to bribe a man to betray his companion in guilt, but the inducement of a free pardon can be held out, and also '*protection*' can be promised—the meaning of which is generally well understood by those who afford this 'protection' to others, or who receive it themselves. It generally includes a free passage to some region in the Far West selected by the individual, and unknown to anyone but the government and the informer, together with a sufficient sum of money to enable him to purchase land, or in some way to live for the future in tolerable comfort and independence. As far as we in this country are concerned, all we know is that parties of this class *disappear*, and we never hear of them afterwards. This may be somewhat 'dirty work,' but it is considered necessary for the preservation of the lives and properties of honest people.

Up to the hour of the opening of the ordinary assizes, I had no information of the course likely to be pursued, or the evidence likely to be brought forward by the Crown. All I heard was that Thornton had 'peached,' not only on his accomplice Hodgens, but also upon a man named Breen, who had been concerned in hatching the conspiracy in Carrickmacross. Breen was a mere ignorant tool—a 'barrow-man,' earning his living by wheeling sacks to be weighed at the market scales, and was the instrument of the two clever Ribbonmen who were soon about to be confronted with each other.

The approaching assizes were accordingly looked forward to with much interest by the people, especially those around

Carrickmacross and resident on the Bath Estate. In due course the judges arrived; the police mustered strongly in the town of Monaghan; the bugle sounded as the judges drove up in their carriage to the Court House, and the lawyers took their places with that easy half-jocular air so peculiar to these gentlemen on such occasions, as if about to enter upon the most agreeable occupation in life.

Far different were the thoughts and feelings of the two men who were now placed at the bar for trial.

Hodgens—the most active in body and daring in mind of those who had engaged in the conspiracy—appeared to be about twenty-five years of age. He was a well-formed, able young man, without any of those features expressive of atrocity which one is accustomed to connect with a person who has engaged to commit a cruel murder. His manner was singularly composed, exhibiting indications of passive endurance rather than of active violence. No one could have dreamed, had they seen him elsewhere, that this was the man who had twice endeavoured to put a pistol to my breast, shoot me on the spot, and run for his life across the country.

His bearing in court—calm, collected, and determined—did not alter from what it had always been; and when brought up from the dock to the rails in front, he looked round on the many hundred faces turned towards him with an unmoved aspect, wholly devoid of excitement, and almost impressing the beholders with the feeling that he could not possibly be guilty.

Breen was a contrast to Hodgens in almost every particular. His head was large and coarse, he was low in stature, thick-necked and high-shouldered; his countenance was wholly devoid of any manly expression, and he seemed to affect a kind of stupid indifference to the scene before him. He never ventured to look around him or gaze upon

the numerous spectators, but every now and then a close observer might have detected a rapid movement of his small sparkling eye, when each person came into court, as if watching for the appearance of some dreaded or hated object. His countenance presented a curious mixture of cunning, cruelty, and stupidity.

At length the judge was seated; the jury were sworn; the prisoners were formally arraigned for conspiracy to murder Patrick M^c^Ardle, the bailiff of the Bath Estate; and when asked, as usual, the solemn question, 'Are you guilty or not guilty?' each answered in a clear and firm voice, 'Not guilty, my lord!'

The first witness produced upon the table was the informer, Thornton.

His appearance was totally different from that of either Hodgens or Breen. He was light and small, with dark hair and sunken eyes, ill-formed, though without any absolute physical defect. He came upon the table with an easy jaunty and self-satisfied air, as if he also, like the lawyers, was about to enter upon the most agreeable occupation in life. I remarked, however, that with all his assumed indifference, he never once ventured to look round upon his old companions at the bar, who, he well knew, were standing close behind him.

I carefully watched Hodgens' face as Thornton ascended the witness table. He stared steadily at his false friend. He evidently tried hard to catch his eye, but failed, as Thornton gave him no opportunity. He became deadly pale; an expression of intense hate mingled with an almost lofty scorn, seemed to pass like a shadow over his countenance, and then all was calm, unmoved, and passionless again.

The look with which Breen greeted his old associate, as he saw him opposed to him on the witness table, was one

of such intense ferocity, cunning, and hate, that I almost expected to see him leap across the rails and stab the informer to the heart.

The tale of remorseless villainy which Thornton unfolded to the attentive and astonished ears of the court and jury, has seldom been equalled in atrocity even in the annals of Ribbonism.

It will be recollected that the prisoners were indicted for 'conspiracy to murder' Patrick M^c^Ardle, the bailiff of the Bath Estate.

The informer detailed in full, how in the beginning they had conspired against me. He told how they had lain in wait for me again and again, but had been afraid to fire in consequence of my being well armed and guarded: how they had watched me and plotted against me for upwards of a year, and how at last they gave it up in despair, in the belief that it was 'an unlucky job,' as something had always turned up against them when they seemed most sure of 'having me down.' He then went on to tell how they determined, as the next best thing, to shoot Paddy M^c^Ardle, the bailiff. How it had been explained to them that if he were put out of the way it would be hard to find another like him; and that all ejectments or legal remedies to recover rent would necessarily be quashed for the time, and perhaps altogether abandoned. They did not enter upon Paddy's trial with the usual formalities of the Ribbon code, as they thought it necessary to do in my case; they 'knew he was guilty as he stood,' and they acted at once upon this knowledge. They 'sat upon him,' as Thornton expressed it, in a public-house in Carrickmacross—a house well known to me and to the police for hatching conspiracies of the kind; and having laid their plans carefully, it was determined to shoot Paddy as he returned home from the market of Carrickmacross. They were well aware that he always

carried arms, and dreaded to face him openly even by a sudden surprise; they therefore examined the road to see from whence they could best shoot him in the back. They fixed on the spot in the 'Khyber Pass,' as exactly suited to this purpose. They watched him as he drove with his wife into the town; and when some mention was made of the woman being with him, a coarse and brutal exclamation followed, that 'it would be well to send both of them to Hell together.' The conspirators then crouched in what they considered their safe ambuscade, 'to blow him and his wife to shivers,' when they should turn their backs at the winding of the road.

Thornton detailed with the utmost precision the whole scene at the loading of the blunderbuss. How he himself had put in the powder and rammed it down with a piece of the democratic newspaper which they had been reading—how they had put in nails and slugs 'enough for them both;' and when the loading was so heavy that they were afraid it might fall out at the muzzle, Hodgens tore off a piece of his working dress of fustian, and rammed it also into the barrel. Thornton mentioned further, that he had remonstrated with Hodgens against doing this, but that he had replied, 'there was no fear, everything would be blown to shivers with such a charge as that.'

So they lay, crouching down, with a watchman set upon the rock (whose name he did not then disclose) to give the signal when their victims were approaching. He described their anxiety as so great, that they could not resist looking out to see their victims as they came on; when to their terror they perceived that they were guarded on either side by policemen; that the moment they saw this, they laid the blunderbuss on the grass, and moved three or four yards stealthily away from it, leaving it under the bank: and in

this position they were pounced upon by the police, arrested, and made prisoners without a struggle.

The details of this terrible plot against the lives of their unsuspecting victims were given without the least appearance of remorse, ill temper, or malignity on the part of the narrator, who had himself taken so active a part in the arrangements. And when his cross-examination commenced he seemed to lay himself out to baffle the able counsel for the prisoner with what he well knew was his only chance of success, a narration of the most exact truth, however appalling it might be. During the whole course of his cross-examination I never once saw him angry or annoyed, or in any way discomposed; and it was manifest that he had considerable enjoyment in the recollection of the plots and schemes he had suggested, even though the result was a failure. When pressed by the cross-examiner on the horrible barbarity of consenting to the murder of an innocent woman rather than lose the opportunity of killing her husband, he treated it as a mere matter of detail—as a somewhat unpleasant necessity, but unavoidable under the circumstances of the case; as if a hind had crossed the sportsman's line of sight whilst aiming at a 'royal stag,' but that rather than lose the prize he had gone through so much labour to secure, he would fire and let the hind take her chance.

The other witnesses produced were sufficient to corroborate the evidence of the approver, and to establish beyond a doubt the guilt of the parties on their trial; and after a most humane charge from Judge Jackson, in which everything which could be said in the prisoners' favour was carefully put forward, the jury, without much delay, brought in a verdict against both Hodgens and Breen of 'guilty.'

The solemn verdict pronounced by the foreman of the jury, in a suppressed, but clear tone of voice, produced no

apparent effect upon the firm nerves of Hodgens. He remained as unmoved as before. His face was pale, but fixed and determined, and exhibited no symptoms of wavering or fear. Breen was also unmoved; his small, fierce, cunning eye seemed to traverse the court more rapidly than before, but no other feature in his face or member of his body moved. They both stood steadily opposite their judge to hear their doom pronounced.

With a feeble and unsteady hand the humane and excellent old judge proceeded to place the black cap upon his head; and with a faltering and broken voice, he pronounced upon the prisoners the dreadful sentence of the law—that they should be taken from the place where they now stood to the prison, and from thence on the appointed day to the common place of execution, and that they should there be hanged by the neck until they were dead—and with an earnestness, in the sincerity of which no one could have a doubt, he added,—'and may the Lord have mercy on your souls!'

They heard their sentence without the quiver of a muscle, and were removed from the court, amidst a silence that was painfully oppressive.

The informer, Thornton—as is usual in such cases—disappeared off the stage of Ireland. He was never seen afterwards by anyone but the gaol officials and myself. I was on a visit at Lord Rossmore's during the assizes; and partly through his influence, and partly owing to the peculiar circumstances of my position, I obtained a private interview with the man who had just succeeded in convicting his friends and accomplices, and who had been upwards of a year in good pay, and under a solemn oath to shoot me.

It was on the day after the scene above described, that I was introduced into the cell of this accomplished scoundrel; and by my own special desire, I was left alone—

locked in with my sworn assassin in his cell—having given instructions to the gaoler that we should not be disturbed for a couple of hours at least.

I carefully examined and prepared my pistols, lest the ruffian should make any attack upon me; but my precautions were quite unnecessary. I found him as cheery and well pleased with himself—now that all was over—as he had been at the commencement of the task he had undertaken of giving evidence against his companions. Not one feeling of remorse—not one shade of pity or pain at what he had done, seemed ever to cross his mind. My object in visiting him, however, was not to attempt to raise up emotions of the softer kind in his breast; I wanted to find out from him the truth of the deep and complex ramifications of the whole Ribbon Confederacy.

He appeared to be perfectly willing to tell me all he knew; but it was evident he had never been deeply trusted by any of the Ribbon leaders. Their schemes and ultimate designs had never been laid before him. He knew, however, a vast deal about their practices and overt acts. To these he had himself been a witness. He described to me the public-house in Carrickmacross in which the Ribbonmen met, and where they had concocted their plans—the owner of which is still alive, and now a wandering pauper, his house having passed into other hands. He told me how a man named Mixy M°Mahon, of Tullyvara, had agreed upon Paddy M°Ardle's murder—in managing which he was to take an active part; but how, going home one night 'a little the worse for liquor,' Mixy M°Mahon was drowned, having been found next morning, quite dead, with his face in a pool of water scarcely eighteen inches deep. He related to me the whole scene of my trial in the barn, which has been already described, giving me the names and residences, in full, of all the parties then present.

He chuckled and laughed over the idea of the president proposing that my execution should be postponed until he should get from me the two iron gates for his farm. He also gave me the names of all the Ribbon leaders, and told me traits and circumstances about them which left not a doubt upon my mind but that he was telling the strict truth.

He described in graphic terms the means which he took so as afterwards to be able to identify me; how he had watched my countenance, as I sat as chairman of the Petty Sessions in the court-house of Carrickmacross, examining the changes of expression in my face, as the several cases came before me; and how he had followed me down the street, and marked my air and gait—so that he could not fail to know me wherever we might meet again. He described the whole plan of attack which I have told in a preceding chapter, and laughed outright at the disappointment of Hodgens when he was baffled in his intention of shooting me between the poor-house and the town.

By degrees, as he warmed by these tales, and by the recollection of past scenes of such pleasurable excitement, he recounted to me the sundry hair-breadth escapes that I myself had had, and his spirits rose immensely as he talked over these delightful expeditions!

'Do you remember, Sir, the night you were returning—you and Morant and another chap' (my son),—'the day after they killed old Bateson?—well, Sir, there we were, lying behind a wall, determined to have you down, when those bloody polis came up and saved you; we were angered that you should still be "on the walk," and the boys in Castleblayney get down a man that was not wanted nigh as much as you. And do you remember, Sir, the evening you were returning home from Culloville, and two chaps riding, one on each side of you, and you with the big pistols in the holsters?—and we let you pass that night too.'

'And why did you not fire?' I asked.

'Bedad we were afeard, Sir,' he replied; 'we heard how you could shoot a crow on a bush with a pistol, and that the other chaps were darlint shots too, and bedad we were afeard to fire lest maybe we'd miss you, and then we were sure to be dead men.'

'Then my always riding with armed men alongside of me, was not a bad plan?' said I.

'Bedad if it hadn't been for that, you were a ghost long since, as sure as you're now flesh and blood! Shure weren't we watching day and night to catch you without them, and didn't we try to get at you in the street when going home at night from the office; and faix I suspect somebody must have told you about it, as I was just going up to you myself—as innocent as a lamb—one night with a letter, and Hodgens, poor fellow that's now no more (the man was not hanged at the time), was to have put a pistol to your side as you took the letter, and just pulled the trigger, and sorra more anyone would know about it.'

'Now did anyone tell you?' he enquired after a pause, and with an inquisitive smile; as if it was a little mystery he would like to see cleared up before he left the country.

'Well indeed, I *was* told of your kind intentions.'

'Bedad I always said so!' he exclaimed, slapping his thigh with satisfaction at having his previous suspicions confirmed on the best authority.

'Well then,' he continued, as if he delighted in recounting his adventures to me the intended victim—an idea which seemed rather to heighten than damp the zest of the recital —'well then, do you remember the day you were out at Annacroff, and the big dog with you? We knew it was you by the sound of the big dog, and we were all ready that day, for you had only one chap with you; when just as

you were coming up, you called out to the dog and wheeled right round and away with you back again. Now did you see us that day, Sir? I've a reason why I'd like to know.'

'No,' replied I, 'I did not, nor had I the least notion you were there.'

'Bedad I always said so,' he broke in again. 'Hodgens and I had a bet about it, for he said you surely saw us; "no," says I, "it's the luck that's always stickin' to him." But sure there's no use in a bet with that poor boy that's now no more, the decent lad; he has only one debt more to pay now, and he's likely to pay that soon, and without any money in his pocket!'

Thus this strange man went on, now delighted to tell me of how nearly he had succeeded, on sundry occasions, in killing me, and now lamenting Hodgens' fate in an easy sentimental way; talking of him sometimes as 'him that was no more,' and sometimes as 'the deceased,' as if he had nothing whatever to do in bringing about his death. He alluded more than once to my 'big dog.' I had, at that time, an enormous Cuban blood-hound called Pluto, so fierce that no one dared contend with him. This dog was very much attached to me; and though I had no reason to suppose he would defend me from an attack, yet I always took him with me when I went out riding—partly as a companion, and partly under the impression that his well-known fierceness to strangers might tend to keep the assassins from attempting a personal onslaught. His bark, or rather 'boom' of delight, as we went along the road, had a deep musical sound, such as I have never before or since heard from any other dog, and one which those who were lying in wait could not for a moment mistake. How little do we know what will add to our safety, or the reverse! The joyous boom of the dog I took with me as a protection, was in fact

the trumpet-sound by which my enemies prepared for an attack upon my life.

It was impossible to be otherwise than deeply interested in this remarkable interview. Here was I, the intended victim, talking with my paid and sworn assassin, who had done all in his power to kill me, and both of us chatting over old times as if the reminiscences were delightful, and I must confess also, both laughing heartily at some of the scenes of disappointment he described. Thornton was in the height of good humour, and seemed delighted at an opportunity of recounting all his former exploits to one so much interested in them as I was.

At length I took out my pencil and paper—'Now tell me, the names and residences and particular acts of those who were foremost in hiring you and plotting to have me and Paddy M°Ardle murdered.'

He paused for a moment at what I proposed; then suddenly resuming his cheerful tone he said, 'Bedad, why shouldn't I? Sure they never cared for me, and why should I care for them? I'm going away now, and I may as well make a clean breast of it, *just to show you I never had any ill will in life to you at all.* And sure it's not every gentleman would come and cheer up a poor fellow like me here, condemned as I am to banishment, and all the world against me; so what does your honour want to know, and I will tell you all the raal truth?'

I saw he was in a communicative mood, so I asked him for the names and residences, and particular acts and parts which each of the leading Ribbon tenants had taken in the conspiracy.

He gave me the names of about twenty men who had been actively engaged in plotting against the lives of myself and Paddy M°Ardle. He told me their sayings and their jokes, their threats and their denunciations, and unfolded to

me a history of all that went on behind the scenes which was absolutely appalling to listen to. I dare not tell here all that he then described. But he gave me the occurrences and the dates, the spots where the occurrences had taken place, and the residences of the parties involved; so that I soon had a minute history of the most diabolical proceedings that I believe any man in my position ever yet possessed. His history was so circumstantial, and his facts so dovetailed into each other, and, above all, his memory was so clear and accurate when I cross-examined him on particular points, that I could not doubt the general truthfulness of what he told me.

'And now, Sir, I have told you what I never thought to have told to living soul on this side of eternity, and I believe you think me a terrible villain—and so I am, and a clever villain too. Well I don't deny but I am 'cute enough, or I wouldn't be here now—it's in the place of the poor boy that's deceased I'd be. I tell you what, Sir, the out and out boys never let me right into their secrets at all, for they always misdoubted me, and good cause they had. It was Hodgens they let into it all. He knows twice as much as I do, only he was always dark and silent; but if you could get him to let it out now, you'd have all the Ribbonmen in the barony in your hand. I've told you some twenty of the worst of them; but bedad your honour could make a clear sweep of them all then, and of the others outside the barony that's leading them on, and that's worse than them itself. You think me a clever chap I know, but bedad *I couldn't hold a candle to Hodgens!*'

'And what do you think would induce him to tell me all he knows?'

'*His life*, Sir!' replied he quickly, 'nothing but his life. Give him that, and he will tell you all he knows, and he knows more than anyone else.'

'I will look to this,' said I. 'And now I must leave you, and we shall probably never meet again: you will get money enough from the Government, so I will not offer you that—and I suppose you would not thank me for any good advice even if I were disposed to give it?'

'Why then, not much, Sir,' he replied rather sadly; 'what's the use of good advice to a chap that had all a father and mother could say, and never minded one of them? It's too late for that now; but I thank your honour kindly all the same.'

'Good bye then. I wish you a better life; and I hope what you have seen and gone through will lead you to a change towards God and man.'

'Good-bye to your honour anyway,' he answered, 'and long may your honour live and reign!' and he waved his hand in farewell.

I left the cell, and we parted to meet no more.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRISONER.

THE information I had received in my interview with Thornton, I considered to be most valuable and important; and, having taken accurate notes at the time, I had now a complete summary of the misdoings of many persons who little dreamed that I knew anything whatever about them in their relation to the Ribbon Conspiracy.

I had not, however, forgotten the last words of Thornton concerning Hodgens, that he, and he only, had been admitted into the knowledge of all the deeper plots of the Ribbonmen, and that the prospect of his life being saved was the only motive likely to induce him to tell what he knew.

My first step, therefore, was to call upon her Majesty's Solicitor-General, who was still in the town of Monaghan. I sketched generally to him the nature of my interview with Thornton; I gave him to understand that Hodgens, now lying under sentence of death, knew all the ramifications of the Ribbon Conspiracy in its darker and deeper features, and I urged upon him how important a step it would be towards the breaking up of the whole system, if we could get such information from Hodgens as would enable us to arrest some of the chief leaders outside the Barony of Farney; I also pressed upon his consideration my conviction that if these men could be secured, a general rush would be made by the rest to 'peach' upon each

other, and thus the whole system could be unfolded and broken up.

The Solicitor-General quite admitted the importance of the matter, but said that he did not see how it could be done, as it would be impossible for the Government to spare Hodgens' life unless he gave information which would lead to the immediate apprehension and conviction of the offenders, and under his circumstances, as a convicted felon, this could scarcely be.

I admitted the importance of the proposed conditions. The difficulty was how to ascertain the nature of the information the prisoner was capable of giving, so as to justify a promise of his life; and I asked the Solicitor-General if he would confide this task to me, and if I claimed from the Government that Hodgens' life should be spared, whether he would promise that my request should be granted.

He hesitated a little at this proposition, and then replied: 'I assure you, Mr. Trench, if you can obtain information from Hodgens of such a nature as that it may prove of real practical value to the Government, you may depend upon it they will deal fairly with this wretched man, and we shall have no objection to spare his life.'

'But how are we to judge of this?' I asked; 'you might perhaps obtain information from him which you would not think sufficiently valuable to warrant you in sparing his life. And if you acted on it against his confederates, it would appear like a breach of faith.'

'I perceive the difficulty,' said he, 'but I do not see how it can be met—I should not be justified in promising to spare this man's life, merely because asked by an individual. The Lord-Lieutenant alone could take such a responsibility upon himself—neither should I be justified in declining to make use of such information as might

come to my knowledge if I could thereby put an end to this atrocious system of Ribbonism.'

'I cannot deny the justice of your observations,' I observed, 'but under these circumstances it would be impossible for me to interfere.'

I returned to Rossmore Park, sad enough, for I felt sure that such an opportunity might never be found again of unravelling the whole Ribbon Conspiracy, and exposing its inmost workings.

I told all that had happened to Lord Rossmore, and he recommended me to go up at once to the Lord-Lieutenant, and obtain a personal interview with him, and ascertain whether he would promise to spare the prisoner's life on condition of valuable information being given: or—if he thought it desirable for the good of the country that he should be executed—to abstain from using any of the information obtained, against his accomplices. So deeply did I feel interested in this matter, that I resolved at once to follow his Lordship's advice, and accordingly I started for Dublin early the next morning.

I found no difficulty in obtaining an interview with the Lord-Lieutenant, and he heard me patiently and kindly; but he did not at first seem to think it possible that my request under these conditions could be granted. He stated that he could not promise to abstain from using against the Ribbonmen any information of which the Government might become possessed. At the same time he would be very glad indeed to spare the life of Hodgens, if in so doing he could expose and bring to justice the leaders in this dreadful system.

'Then I fear, my Lord, under these circumstances, I can do nothing. I would not for worlds be the means of inducing this wretched man to betray his accomplices on the understanding that his life would be spared, and then that

he should be hanged afterwards, if his information should not prove to be sufficiently important to justify the commutation of his sentence.'

'I see your difficulty,' replied his Excellency: 'can you suggest anything yourself which would meet it?'

'Nothing which I could well venture to propose,' I answered, 'unless it were that your Excellency would entrust the matter to my discretion, and promise me to spare the man's life *if I ask it.* I will then go to him and tell him plainly how matters stand. He is clever and intelligent, and I am sure he will thoroughly comprehend his position. I will tell him that I have your Excellency's promise of pardon in my hand. That if he will really tell me all he knows, and that the information he gives is important and such as can lead to important results, his life shall surely be spared; but if his information is of no real value it shall never pass beyond myself—that no advantage shall be taken of it against his accomplices—but that his life cannot be spared.'

'And will he believe you?' said his Excellency; 'will he not think you have betrayed him into giving information, and then that you do not apply for his pardon?'

'I think he will believe me,' replied I; 'and at all events, whether he does or not, I shall then have it in my own power to act truly by him in the matter, as no one can know what he tells me but myself; and I will risk the danger, if your Excellency will give me your promise.'

'Recollect what you ask, Mr. Trench,' observed his Excellency; 'you ask no less than that I should promise you to spare this man's life, if *you* ask it, and on *your* judgment, and *yours only*, as to whether his information may be of any value to the Crown or not!'

'Quite true, my Lord; I am well aware I have no right to expect such powers to be placed in my hands, but at

the same time unless I obtain them, it is impossible I could be the medium of any communication whatever with this condemned criminal.'

'Do you think he is able to give you any really important information such as the Crown can afterwards make use of?' asked his Excellency.

'I am satisfied he is able,' replied I; 'and if I am allowed to come to a clear understanding with him, I think also I can obtain it from him.' I then recounted briefly my extraordinary interview with his accomplice Thornton, and gave my grounds for believing that Hodgens knew everything about the Ribbon Confederacy, and that nothing but the certainty of his life being spared would induce him to make any disclosures.

'Well, Mr. Trench,' said his Excellency, 'I will take the responsibility upon myself, and I will spare Hodgens' life if you assure me you have sufficient grounds for making the request.'

'Then I have your promise, my Lord, that if I ask you to spare his life you will do so, leaving it *to me* to decide whether the information I receive is worthy of such a gift.'

'You have my distinct promise,' returned his Excellency.

I thanked him for his confidence, expressed my hope that it would not be abused, bowed and retired.

No sooner had I left his Excellency's presence than I felt, in all its force, the delicacy of the task I had undertaken. I resolved, however, to go through with it honestly, and to the best of my ability, and if I failed, to bear both the blame and the danger.

My first step was to proceed to Carrickmacross, and there to unfold to my confidential clerk all that had passed between his Excellency and me; and thinking that

Hodgens would speak more freely to him than to myself, I directed him to proceed at once to Monaghan, to get access through proper credentials to the cell of Hodgens, and there explain to him, that if he would really tell all he knew about the Ribbon Conspiracy, and those concerned in it, so as to enable the Government practically to get at his accomplices, his life would surely be spared. But if he declined this offer, he was a dead man and that he had not the remotest chance of pardon.

My clerk executed his commission with all the delicacy I had expected. He found Hodgens calm and firm; little or no change had apparently taken place in him since his conviction and sentence. He had braced his nerves to the worst, and he was prepared to abide the consequences of his crime.

By degrees my clerk began to unfold to him the real nature of his mission. For a time Hodgens was wholly unmoved, as if he thought it was only a plot to get something out of him which he was determined not to give.

'Are you aware,' said the clerk at last, 'that Mr. Trench has your pardon in his pocket, and that he has only *to say the word and your life is spared?*'

Hodgens leaped up from his seat as he heard these words.

'Is it lies you're telling me?' he exclaimed; 'why do you come here with lies to me at such a time as this?'

'It's *not* lies,' replied the clerk; 'I'm telling you the real truth. Mr. Trench went up himself to the Lord-Lieutenant, and got a promise of pardon for you, if you would only tell all you know about the Ribbon Conspiracy, and those who are concerned in it.'

'And what makes Mr. Trench think I know anything at all about it?' asked Hodgens.

'He knows it right well,' answered the clerk. 'He has

got everything out of Thornton, and he knows that you, and you only, can give the information he now requires.'

A shade passed over Hodgens' countenance as the name of Thornton was mentioned, but it was only momentary.

'I always said I would die hard; but it's a terrible temptation to a man; and sure, after all, it's no great harm to tell on all them that brought me to this end. But how am I certain that Mr. Trench can save my life even if I do peach?' he exclaimed, as if suddenly recollecting himself.

'He will tell you so himself,' said the clerk. 'He is now in Monaghan, and has the promise of your pardon from the Lord-Lieutenant in his hand. You know him well, and though you tried to take his life often enough, you know he would not deceive you.'

'I'm sure of it,' observed Hodgens thoughtfully, 'I know he would not; but it's a terrible disgrace to a man to go and do what Thornton done—I'd a'most as soon die hard.'

'It's a terrible thing to be hanged!'—remarked the clerk.

'That's true, too,' replied Hodgens; and the clerk saw the whole of his powerful frame beginning gradually to shake and tremble with agitation, and large drops of perspiration to stand out distinctly upon his forehead.

'Well, maybe I might as well tell it all out. Come to me to-morrow morning, and you shall have all I know; but Mr. Trench must come himself, as I will not trust anyone else. I must have it from his own lips that my life will be surely spared.'

'You shall have it from himself,' replied the clerk; 'but why not to-night? he is waiting now to see you; let me call him now, and tell him all you have to say.'

Again a dreadful tremor seemed to shake the whole of the young man's frame.

'Not to-night,' said he—'not to-night; I am to see the priest in the morning, and I will tell nothing to anyone till I see him.'

'Tell Mr. Trench all about it *now*,' entreated the clerk; 'let me call him this minute, maybe it will be your last chance.'

'I can't, and I won't,' said Hodgens doggedly; 'I must see my clargy first, and there's no use in pressing me any more.'

His agitation had now increased to the most painful degree—his voice trembled and his knees shook under him. He rose and walked rapidly up and down his small cell, as if to throw off his agitation, and at length he finally addressed the clerk.

'It's no use your waiting or pressing me any more. Come to me to-morrow morning, and bring Mr. Trench with you; but I won't see him or tell a word of anything until I see my clargy first.'

The clerk unwillingly retired; he saw further pressing was useless, and he came and told me all that had passed.

'You could do no more,' I said. 'We must await the result of his interview with the priest. I trust he will induce him to tell us all he knows.'

The clerk shook his head doubtingly, but made no reply.

At ten o'clock next morning, my clerk obtained access to the condemned cell of the criminal. The first glance at the prisoner showed that a great change had taken place since the interview of the preceding day. All traces of doubt, uncertainty, and agitation had completely vanished, and Hodgens stood before him calm and unmoved, with a quiet placidity of manner and countenance, as if all anxiety about his fate was gone. He could scarcely re-

cognise, in the placid features of the man now before him, the shattered and agitated frame he had left the evening before, and he saw at a glance that Hodgens had made up his mind, and was at peace within himself.

'Well,' said the clerk, disguising his fears as well as he could, 'may I send for Mr. Trench, and will you tell him all you know about what we were talking of yesterday?'

'I will tell *nothing*,' returned Hodgens calmly, and with a composed and resigned countenance. 'I will tell nothing, neither to Mr. Trench, nor to anyone else. I have seen my priest, and I'm now prepared to die, and maybe I would never be as well prepared again. So I am content to die, and there is no use in asking me any more. I will tell *nothing*, except to them that has a right to know it, and who should that be but the priest. So now let me alone, for you'll never get another word out of me; *I am content to die for my country!*'

He calmly sat down, and remained in perfect silence, until the clerk, who had addressed him several times without effect, was compelled to leave the cell.

What passed between the prisoner and the priest I know not, but Hodgens adhered to his determination, and his secret died with him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EXECUTION.

THE sentence of death which had been pronounced against Hodgens and his companion in guilt produced a profound sensation in Carrickmacross and the surrounding neighbourhood. The people could scarcely be led to believe that 'conspiracy to murder' was really a capital crime; they had been so long accustomed to conspire, to lie in wait behind hedges, and to plot death to landlords and agents with impunity, that although aware *if they succeeded* in their object their lives would be in jeopardy, yet they considered they were safe from the power of the law so long as their bloody purpose was unfulfilled. The lookers on and abettors of this fearful game had held the same views; never dreaming that by merely subscribing to the murder fund, and debating on the best mode of attacking those they had condemned to die, they had thereby laid themselves open to the most extreme punishment known to the law of England. They would admit that 'blood for blood' was a reasonable and natural law, but blood for the mere plotting and conspiring to kill had not become familiar to their minds.

A deputation of Ribbonmen was accordingly appointed to attend at Monaghan Gaol on the day announced for the execution of Hodgens and Breen. They were instructed to watch the proceedings on the part of the Farney Ribbon Lodges, and to bring back a faithful report as to whether

or not their friends were really put to death. It was agreed that there should be no gathering there of sympathisers, no show of lamentation on the one hand, nor hectoring encouragement to 'die hard' upon the other. A simple commission of a few trusted partisans of the Ribbon Confederacy was considered to be the best mode of ascertaining the real facts of the case; and the members were directed to report cautiously, so that immediate steps might be taken, if necessary, to secure the safety of the confederacy, either by flight or otherwise.

The scene of the execution was very thinly attended by spectators. The 'Farney Boys'—that is, the inhabitants of the barony of Farney—are not general favourites over the rest of the county of Monaghan; and, therefore, there were but few warm sympathisers with the criminals in the county town, situated twenty miles from Carrickmacross. In Ireland an execution has not the same attraction, on its own account, for idlers and roughs, that it seems to possess in England, and very few such attended on this occasion. It was expected by the authorities that there would have been a large influx of people from Carrickmacross, and a considerable force of police were accordingly in attendance on the ground. An undefined notion seemed to prevail that something unusual would take place. Some spoke of a rescue being about to be attempted by the Farney Boys; others that the criminals would be vociferously cheered when they appeared upon the scaffold; and though no one could tell why, yet there was a general anticipation that some unpleasant event would take place at the time of the execution. None such, however, occurred, beyond that of the execution itself. The Ribbonmen had planned it otherwise, and few dared to dispute their arrangements. They had not yet been able to bring their minds to realise the fact that the men were actually about to die; but even

should this prove to be true, they knew well the authorities would be too strong for them to attempt a rescue with any chance of success. If the execution were really and indeed to take place, they considered that the less said about it the better, lest they themselves might be blamed by the people for having led the unhappy victims to the bloody end from which they had always promised them impunity; and if their friends should by any means escape, they knew there would be time enough to make arrangements for a demonstration, and to plot a surer vengeance and a certain death to those who had endeavoured to bring them to the scaffold. Such were the thoughts, and such the language, of those who attended, as the Ribbon deputation, to witness the scene about to take place in the front of Monaghan Gaol.

Some twelve or fourteen men were employed upon this strange commission. They divided themselves into two or three parties on their road from Carrickmacross to Monaghan, so as not to attract observation. When within a mile or two of the town they dispersed into still smaller bodies, and entered the street singly or in pairs, having arranged a rendezvous at a well-known public-house frequented by the Ribbonmen. They were surprised as they entered to find so little stir in the town. Everything appeared to go on the same as usual, except that there was rather less bustle and less business doing than upon ordinary days. The inhabitants remained in their houses except where some special cause required them to go abroad. A few strangers had come in from the country, and some idlers loitered in front of the gaol; but there was no appearance whatever of any sensational excitement.

As the hour for the execution approached, the Ribbonmen emerged singly from their rendezvous, and strolled towards the precincts of the gaol in a lazy careless manner, as if

they were the most unconcerned of spectators. They had previously agreed not to appear to recognise each other should they chance to meet in the crowd; and taking up their positions in different places, each of them as near as convenient to 'the drop,' they awaited with apparent apathy the approach of the final catastrophe.

The spot from whence the unhappy culprit undergoes the extreme penalty of the law in Ireland, is not usually what is termed 'a scaffold' in the ordinary sense of the word. In most counties it consists of an iron balcony permanently fixed outside the gaol wall. There is a small door in the wall of the gaol, commanding the balcony, and opening out upon it. The bottom of this iron cage is so constructed, that on the withdrawal of a pin or bolt, which can be managed from the inside of the gaol, the trap-door on which he stands drops from under the feet of the victim of the law, so that on a signal given by the sheriff, he is instantly launched into eternity. There are usually two or three trap-doors so constructed on the same balcony, so that, if required, more than one man can be hanged at the same time. The upper end of the rope is in each case fastened to a strong iron bar which projects over each trap-door.

The Ribbonmen managed quietly to push their way as close as the police would allow them, immediately under the gallows, so that on the trap falling the bodies of the victims must hang within a few yards of where they stood. Exactly at the hour named for the execution the small door leading out upon the iron balcony was seen slowly to open, and Hodgens walked out bareheaded on the platform. He was followed by Breen, each attended by a priest of the Roman Catholic Church. Hodgens looked steadily and firmly at the crowd below. He was very pale, but he showed no other sign of fear, and he did not speak a word.

The rope was adjusted around his neck ; but even then he did not falter nor flinch in the least, yet neither was there any appearance of defiance or braggadocio in his manner. He stood like a brave, firm man, whose mind was made up, calmly awaiting his death.

Breen was less firm ; he scarcely dared to look at the crowd below. He turned his eyes rapidly from side to side, as if looking for an opportunity to escape, and seeing none, he cast them down till they appeared to be almost closed, and did not raise them again in this world. At the moment the cap, usual on such occasions to conceal the distortions of the countenance, was drawn over the faces of the culprits, a single wild whoop was heard amongst the crowd. It was answered by a shrill whistle, and for a moment there was a pause. It was only for a moment : the death-signal was given by the sheriff, the iron bolt was withdrawn, the conspirators dropped through the balcony, and their bodies hung suspended in the air within a few yards of their Ribbon confederates. Hodgens scarcely struggled at all; he apparently died at once, his neck having been dislocated by the shock. Breen, a strong thick-set man, appeared to struggle hard for life, but his efforts became feebler and feebler, until at last they ceased; and after hanging perfectly still for about half-an-hour, during which the attentive Ribbonmen never left the spot, the bodies were slowly lowered down to the ground, and close under the eyes of their former confederates, the lifeless corpses were carried within the precincts of the gaol.

If it be asked who it was that gave the 'whoop,' and who answered it by the whistle, I answer frankly, I cannot tell. The Ribbonman who afterwards confided to me the whole story which I have just related did not himself know. By many it was not heard at all—or at least it was scarcely noticed—so earnestly was the attention riveted

upon the painful scene before them. Not so with the Ribbonmen. The moment the whoop was heard a sudden gleam of hope flashed simultaneously upon their minds, each man grasped his stick, and held his breath, waiting for a further signal, when a dash would have been made, and a rescue at all hazards attempted. But there was no further signal. Whether it had been intended or not, none came in time: and in the height of this tension of the nerves of every Ribbonman present, the bolt was drawn, and their companions met their doom.

Scarcely a word was spoken by the crowd. There was an audible, deep, internal groan of pain from the lookers-on as the dreadful trap-doors fell with a loud clang, and the bodies shot down through the balcony till checked by the tightened rope; but beyond this scarcely a sound was heard. The crowd silently dispersed. The Ribbonmen again strolled with apparent carelessness towards the public-house, and after a glass or two of whisky each, they left for Carrickmacross, sad and crestfallen enough, but thoroughly convinced they should never see their old companions alive again in this world.

'It is all up with the good ould cause for this bout any way,' observed one of the Ribbonmen, at last breaking silence to his companion.

'True for you,' replied the other. 'The ould stock will not come by their rights this time, I fear, but there is a good time coming.'

'It is a long while about it, then,' said his companion. 'The people said that if Trench and Morant and the other Saxons like them were down or banished, the ould M'Mahon blood would rise and own the country again.'

'Sorra bit,' replied the other. 'It's our own fault, they say, for not rising and banishing them all long ago, but now

they have a howld of it so long, I doubt we will ever get our own land back again.'

'How long is it since they first took it from us?' asked the first speaker.

'Not a one of me knows,' replied the other; 'some say it's nigh three hundred years. It was in the time of her they call Queen Elizabeth, any way, be that long or short.'

'That's a long time ago,' said his companion, 'but, long or short, we are bet this time, any way, and I fear the English will howld their grip for some time longer, before the Farney boys will be able to get the land out of them.'

'I say, Ned,' said one of the party, addressing the temporary leader, 'did ye hear *the shout* and *the whistle?*'

'Didn't I?' replied Ned. 'If I didn't I *felt* it in every vein of my heart. I thought then in airnest we were on for work; but whoever gave it, it was none of us, and of course we couldn't answer it until we saw something more. I'm thinking it was the Armagh boys done it: but what good was it when they done nothing more? Any how if they intended work they should have been quicker at it. The signal came too late.'

'Aye, true enough,' replied his companion. 'I gave such a start that the sight nearly left my eyes when I heard it, and if one more shout like that had come, by the powers I'd have laid open the head of the next man to me with the blackthorn in my hand and chanced it, come what would and whoever he might be; maybe in the scrimmage some good would be done for the poor boys that's gone.'

'It's well for ye that ye didn't then,' said the leader, 'or it's dancing after them ye'd be yourself. It was too late any way.'

'Aye,' replied the other, '*too late!*—everything is too late to free Ireland;' and they proceeded on their way in silence.

The moral effect of this execution upon the Ribbonmen and their sympathisers in Farney was perfectly marvellous, and far beyond anything I could have anticipated. I will enter into no discussion here about the advantages or otherwise of the abolition of capital punishment. It may be wise and humane that it should be altogether abolished. It is a fair and reasonable question for any nation professing to be Christian, whether it can be consistent with the law of the New Testament, by which all *Christians* profess to be guided, to strangle a fellow-creature in cold blood, and in the method described above, no matter what his crime may have been. Our system of hanging criminals is not a pleasant thing to witness, and not a whit more merciful or civilised than the simplicity of the Turkish bowstring. But be this as it may, I cannot approve of the principle which has lately been adopted by our governors. It seems now, that no matter how diabolical *the attempt* to murder may be, no matter how atrociously planned or with what ferocity carried on, if the perpetrator fails in actually *killing* his victim, the punishment awarded is different from what it would have been if he had succeeded. In the latter case it is death, in the former only penal servitude for a limited period of time, often a very short time. The moral guilt appears to me to be precisely the same in each case; and if the object of a public execution be to *deter* men from the perpetration of crime, rather than to take vengeance on them after it has been committed, surely this object would be more effectually obtained by punishing to the full extent the initiative rather than the completion of the crime.

But leaving this difficult question to be determined by more experienced moralists, there can be no doubt whatever but that the execution of these would-be murderers

had a wonderful effect in Farney; and many 'snug farmers,' who had previously no idea that they had placed themselves within the power of the law by joining in conspiracies, became now thoroughly alarmed. This alarm was increased by the arrest of two or three of their own class upon a charge nearly similar to that for which Hodgens and Breen had suffered; and feeling the insecurity of their position, and not knowing the moment that some informer might rise amongst themselves and convict them, the terror of a large body of 'respectable farmers' was beyond what could be conceived.

Under these circumstances it occurred to me that a rare opportunity now presented itself of ridding the country of the baneful effects of Ribbonism; and that if judicious advantage were taken of the panic which the execution of Hodgens and Breen had created, a clearance of conspirators might be effected, which could not be done at any other time.

In accordance with these views, I made a minute examination of the notes I had taken during my remarkable interview with the informer Thornton in the prison. I carefully separated the various transactions which in his details he had huddled together, and wrote out a concise history of the misdemeanours of each of the several conspirators. Having completed this task, I sent for the men, separately, to my office in Carrickmacross, and having called each into my private room, I briefly recapitulated the evidence I had against him. I told him the dates on which he had met his fellow-conspirators, the places where they had assembled, and even the very words he had spoken; and holding up a photograph of his misdeeds to his frightened and astonished view, I charged him point blank with his crime. The conspirators seemed confounded beyond measure, and utterly at a loss to conceive from what source I had derived

my information. They had not courage to attempt a denial.

One scene I particularly remember. I had sent for a man, well known, the same who had sat as judge or president at the mock trial where I was condemned to death by the Ribbonmen in the large barn. He came accordingly to my office. He was a tall man, strong and muscular, apparently about thirty-five years of age, with a lazy slouching gait and manner, like that of one who would prefer idleness and pauper indolence to active energetic wealth. His hair and whiskers were red and bushy, his eyes small and grey. He had by no means a savage aspect; cunning in his countenance appeared to predominate over ferocity.

'I heard your honour wanted to see me,' said he, as he entered my private office. He spoke with a quiet smile upon his countenance, having evidently determined, if possible, to master his emotions, though I believe he suspected the object for which I had summoned him.

'Yes,' I replied; 'how are the crops down in your part of the estate?'

'Pretty fair, your honour, barrin' the potatoes; they are getting black, and I doubt we will ever have the raal ould mealy potato again.'

'It looks like it certainly,' I observed. 'But how is your own farm going on? Is there any little thing you want just now, to make it look a little neat and tidy?'

The man looked at me for a moment, evidently doubtful of my meaning, for he well knew that he deserved no kindness at my hands; but he replied with affected cheerfulness,

'Not a ha'porth, your honour, unless maybe you would allow me a little lock of lime for the land, it is a long time now since it got any: and a barrel or two of lime would be

no harm to whitewash the dwelling house also, just to tidy it up a little for your honour's inspection.'

'By the bye,' said I, somewhat suddenly, keeping my eye steadily fixed upon his countenance, 'did you ever get those *two iron gates* I promised you some time ago?'

'Troth I never did,' answered the man, growing a little pale.

'Why not?'

'Well, indeed, now your honour, I don't know, barrin' that I was loth to give trouble, and you with so many things to think about.'

'Oh! never mind that, I am always ready to fulfil my promises. I was thinking that perhaps you might have a little delicacy in asking me for the gates after *what you said in the barn that night*, when the boys were all met together—the night I was tried for my life and condemned, you know—so I thought I would send for you and remind you of my promise about the gates.'

The man turned deadly pale, and stared at me with a fixed look of terror, speechless and almost motionless.

'Don't you remember,' continued I, 'that night in the big barn, when you, and Pat C——, and Bryan R——, and Hugh M——, and all the other true boys of the right sort, met to have me tried, and you condemned me to be shot and put out of the way? "Guilty, boys," says you—"he must die!" and Hodgens and Thornton were there that same night; and you remember after I was condemned, and all comfortably settled about me, you told the boys, as you sat at the head of the table as president, with the black cap like one of the judges upon your head, "Boys," says you, "don't shoot him until after next Thursday any how; he promised me two iron gates on that day, and I may as well get them out of him before he dies!" And then the boys all began to laugh, and told you to be quick

about it, as not a day would they give me after that; and don't you remember the sport you had when the girl brought in fresh whisky and hot water, and all the funny stories the rest of them told about shooting all tyrant landlords and agents; and——'

Suddenly as I was rapidly proceeding with my tale, my eye still fixed upon him, I saw his countenance assume a glazed look; he tottered for a moment, endeavouring to balance himself as he stood, but losing all consciousness, his muscles relaxed, his whole frame quivered, and falling back against the wall, he dropped in a fainting fit upon the floor!

My clerk ran to his assistance; but recovering himself quickly, he stared for a few moments wildly around him, and then sat down upon a chair which was near, to hear my final sentence.

'You see I know all about you,' said I, in a grave and altered tone. 'You must not remain upon the estate; if you give up possession of your farm, and leave the country whenever I require it, I will probably never bring up this matter against you. If you refuse to leave, you must take the consequences.'

'I will go, Sir,' replied the man, 'whenever you require it.'

I left the room. He soon recovered himself, and returned to his home, with what feelings may be conjectured.

In a somewhat similar manner, though with scenes less striking, I had interviews with many of the several conspirators, concerning whom I had received information from Thornton; and it was manifest from their countenances and admissions, and even by their *denials*, when I travelled in the least out of the correct path, that the account the informer had given me was in each case substantially true. They could not conceive, and *to this*

day they are wholly ignorant (they will be surprised should this book ever fall into their hands) of the source from which my information was derived, and perceiving that I really knew a great deal, they fancied I knew much more than I did, and their fears persuaded them I could bring them to justice any moment I pleased. Having once established this influence over them, I had but little trouble in inducing them to quit the estate for good; in fact they were themselves in a hurry to be off. I therefore allowed them to take their stock and crop, and all that they had (forbidding only that they should sell their usual tenant-right interest), and to pass away quietly out of the country Their vacated farms were re-let to new tenants of more unexceptional character.

The whole of these events had a wonderful effect in Farney. The Ribbonmen and their abettors had been everywhere worsted and unsuccessful. After sixteen months' constant watching, they had been unable to get a shot at me without exposing themselves to the most imminent danger of being shot dead upon the spot themselves—a risk they by no means fancied. They had then turned their attention to the murder of Paddy M'Ardle; but here also they had failed, and in preparing, as they thought with safety to themselves, 'to blow him to shivers' with the heavily loaded blunderbuss, two of the conspirators had been arrested and hanged. Four or five more had been confined for a long time in prison upon suspicion, and others had been tried for their lives; and, though ultimately acquitted, they had never recovered the loss of money and character sustained in their imprisonment and trial. And now eleven more of their number, who had hitherto escaped the immediate action of the law, but who they themselves well knew were guilty, were forced to leave their farms, and go forth wanderers upon the earth. In short, as Paddy M'Ardle

described it, 'we had bagged a dozen or more of them, whilst they had never taken a feather out of one of us!'

All who are well acquainted with Ireland know the immense effect which success, or the reverse, has upon the confidence of the multitude. Indeed it is a feeling by no means confined to Ireland; and seeing that in everything the conspirators had been outwitted, worsted, or punished, the remainder of the sympathizers gave up their losing game, and returned to industrial pursuits.

In a very short time—so short that I could scarcely realise the change—the whole tone of the estate had altered; industry and activity took the place of apathy and indolence. Those who at one time were fired with sentiments that Ireland would soon become 'free,' as they chose to call it, and all landlords and agents banished off the land, returned with a suddenness, which only those who know Ireland well could believe, to the patient labour of their farms; a wholesome acknowledgment of the power of the law pervaded the mass of the population; the Ribbonmen suddenly collapsed or disappeared out of the country; their sympathizers no longer seemed to take any interest in their fate; and order, good feeling, and comfort in the management of this large and important district prevailed over the length and breadth of the Bath Estate, and, with one or two interruptions, consequent upon that greatest of all Ireland's curses, a contested election, which creates more general ill-feeling than any other incident I have ever known, have continued so ever since.

It is now twelve years since the last of the events I have described above took place. Since then I have never carried arms, nor have I thought any protection to my person necessary. My friends have sometimes urged upon me that my conduct in this respect was rash. I did not, and I do not think so. My present impression is that I shall never carry them again.

CHAPTER XIX.

PATSY McDERMOT.

THERE was nothing which surprised me more during the whole of this period of anxiety and excitement, than the perfect trust which appeared to be reposed in me by the peasantry, at the very time when it was considered by a large party amongst them that I ought to be put to death.

It is true the desire to 'put me off the walk' did not, in any case, appear to be the result of private hatred or revenge; it seemed to be the consequence of a fixed belief that, in demanding 'rent for the Saxon,' I was necessarily a tyrant and oppressor, and that if I, and such as I, were laid low, 'they would have the country to themselves, as of old.' Strange as such an idea may now appear to be, and absurd as in reality it was, yet there is no doubt that it existed, and that it was the main-spring of the conspiracy against my life.

But at the very time that these efforts were being made to effect my murder, the most unbounded confidence appeared to be reposed in me by those who in difficulties sought assistance or advice: and I should scarcely be credited were I to tell of the large sums of money which, from time to time, I was earnestly besought to take care of, and the strange secrets of which I was made the depository.

I remember on one occasion remonstrating with an apparently pauper peasant, who, expecting that 'the big war

would soon begin,' entreated me to receive from him a sum of 200*l.* in sovereigns, in order that it might be safely kept. He asked no interest for it; he did not even require a written acknowledgment for its receipt; all he wanted was that I would take it and keep it for him. 'It would make my mind 'asy,' he said, 'if once I knew it was safe in your honour's hands.'

'But,' replied I, 'you know well the Ribbonmen have sworn to shoot me, and perhaps if I were down your money would not be so easily forthcoming.'

'Oh, great luck to your honour!' replied the man, 'I have no fear of that. I always said you would bate them blackguards yet; never fear but the luck will stick to you still, and ye'll get the better of them in the end, with all their devil's devices; but sure if you were down yourself, wouldn't the money be safe enough in the office, and I'd have it as big as ever when I wanted it.'

'Why not put it in the bank?' I asked; 'it would surely be much safer there: and, besides, they would give you interest for its use.'

'Troth, and that is the very thing I'm afraid of,' replied this accomplished financier; 'it's *spending it themselves* they'd be, or may be lending it to some one else, and then it wouldn't be 'asy to come at when I'd want it most. Just lock it up yourself in the office safe, and there is no place I'd be so sure of coming at it all right again.'

The importance of obtaining the identical sovereigns back again which he was now anxious I should receive, appeared to take a strong hold upon his mind.

I refused, however, in this, as in all similar cases; and he was compelled to decide between the bank and—what he conceived to be the more secure place of deposit—the thatch of his own cabin. The latter, I afterwards understood, had got the preference.

But it frequently happened that far more delicate trusts than those of a financial nature were committed to my care; and as in the case of Mary Shea and Alice McMahon, so in others also, I became the depository of little secrets of a very different class, and especially amongst the intending emigrants. In no case, I admit, did they consult me, unless they thought they could obtain some valuable assistance; but on such occasions they did not hesitate, in the most open and unrestrained manner, to confide to me all their hopes and fears.

An instance of this nature, and illustrative of what I have stated, occurred about this period.

There was at that time a young man living on the Bath Estate, named Patrick McDermot, or 'Patsy,' as he was generally called in the country. He was an idle, rollicking, pleasant fellow, remarkably good-looking, and a general favourite amongst the girls. Not a fair, nor a wake, nor a race, nor a funeral, could go on with advantage unless Patsy graced it with his presence. His father and mother had died during the famine. They had held a small plot of ground, about two acres, and a house or cabin attached; but not having been naturally of an industrious disposition, they sank at once—as did thousands of others—when 'the hungry year' came upon them. Patsy was only a 'slip of a boy' in 1847; but he was so handsome and good-natured, and of such a genial pleasant disposition, that he readily obtained the run of most of the neighbours' houses; who, partly from pity, and partly because he seldom failed to enliven the social circle with his presence, were always glad to grant him 'his bit and sup' whenever he chose to call in.

The natural indisposition to labour which Patsy had inherited from his father, was by no means amended by this vagabond sort of life; and he grew up, as I have stated, a

good-looking, attractive youth, with manners superior to most of the hard-working young men around him, but without having acquired any habits of labour or steady industry.

This was all very well, and proved to be a pleasant life enough, so long as he was not forced to pay any rent whatever; but when a firm demand was made, and a clear understanding come to, that the rent must be paid or the land surrendered, poor Patsy 'lost his presence of mind,' as he expressed it, and frankly confessed he did not know what to do. It was in this position of affairs that my first interview occurred with Patsy M^cDermot.

'Well, M^cDermot,' said I, as he appeared one day in reply to a summons from my office, 'what are you going to do? You owe four years' rent. Are you going to settle the amount?'

'Couldn't your honour call me "Patsy?"' replied he, evading my question with adroitness; 'it's a kindly sort of name the neighbours has for me, and I'd know far better how to spake to your honour if you was to use it yourself.'

'I have no objection,' I answered, 'and shall be happy to call you Patsy in future; but that does not affect my question; and I must know at once what your intentions are, as I cannot allow you to remain in possession of your land unless you come to some settlement about your rent.'

'For the matter of that,' replied Patsy, 'there are plenty holding their land still, who owe as many years' rent as I do.'

'Quite true,' said I; 'but I don't intend they shall do so long.'

'Maybe your honour won't find it so 'asy to put them out of it as you think,' remarked Patsy.

'Perhaps not,' replied I; 'and perhaps, also, I estimate the difficulties of the situation quite as highly as you do. But let other people take care of their own business, and let me bring you back to yours, which you are so uncommonly quick at evading; once more—do you intend to pay up, or to emigrate?'

'Your honour is mighty tight upon a poor desolate orphan boy like me, without father or mother to care for him,' answered Patsy, with a slight affectation of whimper in his tone of voice. 'But truth is best,' continued he, seeing this would not go down, 'and I may as well tell you at once, that I haven't a ha'porth of goods in the world, nor as much money this minute in my pocket as would buy me a breakfast of Indian meal.'

'And how have you lived up to this?' I asked; 'you don't seem starved, or as if you had wanted anything; even your clothes are better than most people can afford to wear these times. How have you got on so well hitherto?'

'Well, your honour,' replied Patsy, 'it would only be troubling you too much, and takin' up your time to tell you all about it; but the neighbours was always good to me, and the girls was kind and more than good, as they always are; and, what with one thing or another, I never wanted up to this—that is always barrin' a trifle of cash. I could get victuals and clothes 'asy enough; but, somehow, whenever I axed the loan of a few shillings, sorra farthing there happened to be in the house just then, and I never could get money to pay my rent. And now if your honour takes the little place from me, maybe the neighbours wouldn't be quite the same to me as they were; and bedad I'm tellin' no lie when I say that maybe the girls themselves —good as they always were—wouldn't think me so comely or clean-looking a chap as they always thought me before.'

'Nonsense, Patsy,' said I; 'you know well half the girls in the country are in love with you, and there is no such favourite, I hear, in the Barony.'

'Was your honour ever a bachelor?' asked Patsy with an innocent look.

'To be sure I was,' replied I.

'And ye got married after a while I suppose?' enquired Patsy, still retaining his affected innocence.

'Of course I did,' said I; 'you know well I have a wife and family.'

'I was thinkin' as much,' rejoined Patsy with a reflective air; 'and I was just turning in my mind whether your honour ever remarked that the noble young ladies you would be courtin' ever found out by any chance that you were not nigh so handsome and clean-lookin' a young gentleman after your weddin' as what you was before it.'

'You are a shrewd fellow,' replied I laughing, 'and uncommonly active at changing the venue from your own case to that of someone else. But all this won't do; you must give me an answer—Will you pay up or emigrate?'

'Well, well, now,' observed Patsy, scratching his head in a puzzled manner, 'but your honour is mighty strict in wanting to get a straight answer from a poor orphan boy like me, that's not accustomed to give it: but sure I suppose if you must have it, you must; and as I have no money to "pay up," as you call it, and as I don't want to put your honour to any trouble, I suppose I must only cross the says like the rest of them, and seek my fortune in America. And yet,' he continued, in an altered tone, 'I think there is *one* girl, and only one, who would fret in earnest after me. But it can't be helped, she must put up with some other boy, for I'm not able to pay nor stay; and I'd never ax her to bear the hardship of coming out

with me even if she were willin' to do it—which in troth I doubt she would be; for the girls likes them best as can always sail with a fair wind—why wouldn't they poor things? So when will your honour send me out? I have no money to pay for my passage, nor to buy a ha'porth for the journey; so I will give you up my little place freely, and I only hope your honour will act by me like a gentleman, as no doubt you always wor.'

I told him that Lord Bath always wished those who emigrated from his estate to go out comfortably, and that I would provide for him as well as I could; that he should have a free passage to any port in America he pleased, a respectable outfit, and a sovereign in his hand on landing.

'Well, your honour,' observed Patsy, on hearing what could be done for him, 'it's all very fair, and as much as I could expect; and the world will go harder with me than ever it's done yet, if I don't knock as good a living out of them chaps in America as ever I did in ould Ireland; so I will give you up my little place whenever your honour wishes it, and—what is better—I'll give you my blessing along with it. You may put me down for *Boston*.'

About three or four days after my interview with Patsy, a young woman came into my office; and asking if she could see me alone, she addressed me in a quick and abrupt manner.

'Has Patsy McDermot got a ticket?'

'I don't know what you mean,' I answered.

'Has your honour given Patsy McDermot a ticket for America?' asked the girl.

'I never give tickets,' said I; 'but McDermot has expressed his intention to emigrate, and I have entered his name upon the list; he is to have a free passage to Boston whenever he chooses to go.'

'To Boston!' exclaimed the girl, 'to Boston? and why to Boston?'

'I don't know,' replied I; 'I gave him his choice of any port he wished to select, and I think he named Boston as the one; but I would as soon send him anywhere else. I suppose you are his sister from your likeness to him?'

'It would be better for me maybe if I was,' observed the girl, 'but I'm not, though the neighbours often said we was like.'

When first the girl came into the room she had kept her face partly concealed, by pressing her shawl up to her mouth; but in her anxiety to obtain information concerning Patsy she had gradually lowered her hand, so that her full features were now before me. She was a pure Celt, both in her appearance and manner. Her hair was black as jet, her eyes dark and flashing, and as rapid as lightning in their motion; her nose—though it did not warrant the unpleasant designation of being 'cocked'—yet had certainly a tendency upwards; and her short upper lip and small chin appeared to have a similar inclination. I have heard it remarked that the distinctive difference beween an English and purely Irish face is, that the former looks as if the hand of nature had been passed over it downwards, when coming into the world, whilst the Irish face looks as if, on that occasion, the hand had been gently passed over the features in a contrary or upward direction.

The features of the girl before me seemed exactly to answer to this latter description. She was decidedly handsome, intelligent, and vivacious; but it was evident that the hand of nature had been passed, very gently, but still in an upward direction over her countenance.

It struck me at once, from the excessive anxiety of the young woman to obtain information concerning Patsy, that as she was not his sister, she was probably the girl to

whom he had alluded as the 'only one who would fret in earnest after him.' So, without appearing to take any peculiar interest in the case, I merely asked her name.

'Catherine Farnan,' answered the girl; 'why does your honour want to know it?'

'You told me,' I replied, 'that you were not Patsy McDermot's sister, and I wanted merely to enquire why you are specially interested in ascertaining what port he goes to. If you have any good reason for wishing to know this, and if Patsy won't tell you himself, come to me, and I will tell you where and when he goes.'

'Your honour called him "Patsy,"' observed the girl; 'did you ever know him before now?'

'No,' replied I; 'that is, I never saw him to my knowledge until he came before me the other day when sent for. I was forced to bring him to some settlement, as he owed four years' rent, and I could not get him to pay anything; but I hear he is always called Patsy in the country, because he is such a favourite, and especially amongst the girls.'

Her countenance changed a little as I said this; but she was silent for a few moments. She then said firmly, but with a strange suppressed energy—

'He might have a nice place, and plenty in it of the best as long as he lived, if he would only once spake the word; but he didn't spake it yet, and now I suppose he never will. Well, let him go; I'd die sooner than I'd tell him!'

Passion was in her countenance and resolution in her manner as she said this; and, without another word, or even a motion of farewell to me, she suddenly left the room.

I could not but see exactly how matters stood; but I did not know how to remedy the case unless by revealing

the young lady's feelings to the object of her affections. And this I did not think it fair to do, as they had certainly been inadvertently betrayed to me. I resolved, however, on my next interview with Patsy to try if I could not give him a hint as to how matters really were. I made enquiries, accordingly, about the girl, and found that her father was owner of some eight or nine acres of land, on which he had a comfortable house; that he was comparatively rich, and had saved some money, and was, on the whole, well-to-do in the world. He had one only child, his daughter Catherine. Her mother had died soon after her birth, and he, having been much attached to his wife, had never married again. Catherine, accordingly, was sole mistress of the establishment. Her father dearly loved her, and in some respects she was a spoilt child. But she also dearly loved her father; and, though wayward and quick-tempered towards others, she was always kind and gentle towards him. She felt he had no female companion but herself; and that perhaps it was partly for her sake that in after life—when his grief for his wife had worn off—he had not married another, lest he should bring in one who must necessarily be put over her in the house. Accordingly, with the quick wit of her race—mainly on her father's account and in repayment for his self-denial, and partly on her own account, lest if he should become lonesome he might supersede her—she did her utmost to render her father happy; and when this is truly done towards man what woman can ever fail?

But Catherine soon began to have other objects, hopes, and aspirations besides those of attending on her father. She never neglected him or his household for a moment, and the latter was well known as a model of neatness, comfort, and thrift; but, as she grew up to womanhood, and her beauty and engaging qualities became developed, she naturally

attracted many suitors amongst the young men of the district. She was considered in the country as an heiress of much wealth; and happy would the 'boy' be considered who could secure her affections and her farm.

But Catherine knew her good looks and her position quite as well, and valued them quite as highly, as her lovers.

Her chief amusement was satire. When her work was over on a summer's evening, she would go out 'just for a little walk' in the green lane near her house; and, strange to say, she generally met one or two of 'the boys' of the neighbourhood, who happened to come out about the same time, and to walk in the same place. It was near her father's house, so all was right in point of propriety; and Catherine enjoyed playing off her country lovers against each other, and hitting them right and left in her quick-witted and vivacious manner.

Amongst these wanderers after Catherine, Patsy used sometimes to come. But he did not care to be so often with her as others. The fact was, Patsy was not a marrying man. He found his course of life so pleasant as a bachelor, that he had just then no inclination to change it. He was known to have a 'nice little place of his own,' and Patsy prudently kept his own counsel about not having paid any rent, and the consequent accumulation of arrears. He was handsome, and always pleasant; and like many a bachelor in high life, under not very dissimilar financial circumstances, he was a capital diner-out in his own more humble way; and he lived most joyously on the fruits of his good looks. Under these peculiar circumstances, and for private reasons besides, which Patsy did not choose to disclose, he had no desire whatever to lay siege to the affections of the heiress, but contented himself with such a modest amount of attention as would secure him a welcome

whenever any amusement was on foot at Catherine's hospitable home.

But it sometimes happens that those who show least attention to an heiress, attract her special observation; and Catherine being naturally of a quick and jealous nature, became quite annoyed at the easy way in which the chief beau amongst the young men of the country treated her. She set herself accordingly to win him. In undertaking a task of the kind—which in the first instance was done purely from pique—she soon became interested beyond what she had originally intended; and observing the better manners, quiet deportment, and admitted good looks of Patsy M'Dermot, she was unintentionally caught by the very man whom she had intended to capture. Patsy saw all this, and knew it quite as well, or far better, than she did. With all his apparently careless habits, he was a shrewd and thoughtful fellow; and in truth he was rather afraid that Catherine would be too many for him if he were bound to her in matrimonial links. He admitted the beauty and attractions both of her person and her place; but her temper was high, and her wit quick, so that —as Patsy acknowledged—'he would be afeard of his life to vex her.' And accordingly, though he perfectly saw, from her manner towards him, how matters really stood, yet he kept a respectful distance—always going there accompanied by others, and taking care to avoid anything which could lead to a disclosure of her feelings.

Affairs were in this state when my interview with Patsy occurred; and, if the truth must be told, I believe his readiness to give up his place and emigrate was accelerated by an undefined feeling which came over him occasionally, that if he stayed long in the country he would have to marry Catherine whether he liked it or not; as everyone told him she was such a self-willed girl that 'Faix she'd

marry any man she pleased, and do what she liked with him afterwards!'

Under these discouraging circumstances, Patsy thought prudence the better part of valour, and he was by no means unwilling to take the opportunity now afforded him to fly.

For about a fortnight after Catherine's appearance and abrupt exit from my office, I neither saw nor heard anything of either party; but at the end of that period Patsy came to me, and told me he was prepared to go.

'Where to?' I asked. 'Are you going to Boston, as you told me before?'

'*Whisht your honour, spake 'asy!*' replied Patsy, dropping his voice to a low key, 'that was only a make-believe; it's to New York your honour must send me. I never intended to go to Boston at all.'

'And why did you name Boston to me in the first instance?' I enquired.

'Why ye see,' replied Patsy, a little confused, 'I didn't want the neighbours to know anything at all about it. When a poor boy goes out to seek his fortune anew, it's better no one should know anything about him beforehand.'

'That depends on what sort of a "poor boy" he has been,' said I. 'But do you know, Patsy, I doubt if you are wise in leaving the country at all; a good-looking, likely chap, such as you are, might have plenty of girls glad to take him; and if you got anything of a fortune it would be easy to clear off the little debt upon the place, and you might live well enough in the old country yet.'

Patsy watched me attentively all the while I was speaking, and at last he said with a sly look, but without moving a muscle of his face—

'I heard tell she was with your honour since I saw you?

I could hardly keep my countenance, as I felt that I was found out. I kept it, however, and replied—

'You heard *who* was with me?'

'It's your honour's self that knows well what I mean,' said Patsy, 'for all you look so grave as if you was going to a burying; but in troth it's no go this time neither. I'll tell your honour a secret—*whisper!*' and he put his hand to the side of his mouth, as if to prevent some imaginary person from hearing the announcement of his solemn but secret conviction, 'whisper! your honour, I'm ashamed to confess it to anyone but yourself, but by this and by that, *I'm afeard of her!*'

I could not help laughing outright as he committed this awful secret to my keeping.

'Well, perhaps you are right; away with you to New York or wherever else you please, and no one shall know your destination from me until you are gone six months at all events. After that you must look out for yourself.'

'All right, your honour,' replied Patsy, apparently much relieved, 'only give me six months' start of her; and if she ever ketches me after, it's not yourself I'll blame.'

Patsy left accordingly with an order for New York, telling everyone, as he did so, that Boston was his destination, as he had often heard his mother say that a sister's husband lived there, and 'got mighty rich by keeping a grand hotel,' where he hoped to have free quarters for the remainder of his life, and die there eatin' and drinkin' and no one to hinder him.

About a year after the occurrence I have related, and long after Patsy and his affairs had completely escaped my memory, a young woman presented herself in my office. Her dress was unusually good, for one evidently of the peasant class; her countenance was intelligent, and her

manner and appearance far beyond the ordinary type. I thought I recognised her features; but I had been in communication with so many thousands of people since I had seen her, that I could not remember who she was. She addressed me in a quiet manner—

'Could I see you inside—in your private room, Sir?'

'Certainly, if you wish it.' And I rose and led the way. I asked her to take a seat, which she did; and then throwing back a veil which she wore over a somewhat quaint hat, she said,

'Perhaps you don't remember me, Sir?'

'I am ashamed to say I do not,' replied I; 'I know I have seen your face before, but I don't recollect where, or under what circumstances.'

'Do you remember Catherine Farnan?'

The whole affair between Patsy and her rushed back upon my memory in a moment, and I exclaimed, rather suddenly—

'Oh! yes, I know all about you now. Is there anything I can do for you?'

'And *what* do you know about me?' asked the girl, raising her handsome and flashing eyes, and looking me straight in the face.

It was my turn now to look a little confused; however I merely said,

'Are not you the young woman that I mistook for Patsy McDermot's sister, when you asked me where he was going, and were so surprised when I told you it was to Boston?'

'I see you remember me,' observed the girl quietly, her suspicions being calmed by my reply. 'But *did* he go to Boston?'

'He did not.'

'Where did he go?'

'He went to New York,' I answered, feeling now fully absolved from my promise of six months' secresy to Patsy.

'I thought so,' she observed in a reflective tone; and she was silent for a few moments; she then said calmly,

'I buried father last week.'

'Indeed! I did not know he was dead. I suppose then you have come to consult me as to what you had best do about the farm. May I ask have you been married since I saw you?'

'No,' replied the girl, 'nor I won't marry in this country. I have made up my mind to sell all I have here—for all father had he left to me—and I'll go out to New York at once.'

'To New York!' I exclaimed; 'why to New York? *You don't mean*——?'

'I *do* mean,' said the girl, interrupting me, 'though your honour did not let on about it even to myself—and I am obliged to you for that same; yet sure enough you know all about it just as well as I do. Whether Patsy ever cared for me or not I don't know; but this I know—I never cared for anyone but Patsy. I'm determined to see him in New York, for I hear from others as well as from yourself that he is there. I am not going out poor, for father had a bag of gold sovereigns that he kept secret, always expecting that "the big war" would come on, and then he'd have some money to leave the country. I have two hundred gold sovereigns with me now, and plenty of goods besides at home, which I can sell. So—as I said—I won't go out poor. If Patsy is married when I go out, why then I can set up some business for myself, or perhaps come back to the old country again—for I'll never share myself or the gold sovereigns with anyone else. But if Patsy is of the

same mind as I am now, why I'll take care and let him know it some way or other. What's the use of two people being unhappy for life on account of a false shame? I tried that long enough, but I've got more sense now.'

'I think your resolution an excellent one,' said I, 'sound common sense; and I have no doubt it will be appreciated by Patsy. He was always a light-headed young fellow, who liked living amongst his friends, and amusing himself up and down in preference to steady industry. I hope if you meet him in New York, and if matters turn out as you and all of us must wish, that you will cure him of those idle habits.'

'Maybe I won't be able to find him after all!' exclaimed the girl—with a look of intense pain, as if the idea had suddenly shot across her mind. 'Maybe I'll never see him again! Oh! what would I do if, after my long weary journey, I'd never see Patsy again?'

She sat silent for a moment as if almost stupefied at the reflection; and then recovering her previous train of thought with a rapidity and vivacity almost marvellous, she burst out in a joyous and triumphant tone—

'But if once I *do* ketch him, won't I give it to him! well, well—no matther! But if I won't give it to Patsy in earnest, when once I ketch him, you may say my name isn't Catherine Farnan!'

She rose, held out her hand to me; and half crying at the possibility of being unable to find him, and laughing almost hysterically at the idea of what she would do to him if she did 'ketch him,' she left the apartment.

Her uncle came in next day to make some arrangement about her farm:—

'Catherine seems quite determined upon going,' I remarked to him when we were alone.

'She is, Sir. She has had her mind made up to it this

long time, and nothing but unwillingness to leave the old man kept her here until now.'

'Did her father know of her regard for Patsy?' I enquired.

'He knew it well,' replied her uncle; 'and good cause he had too, as it was that broke him down in the end, though Katty did her best to satisfy him. He was always bemoaning the fancy she took for "that idle spalpeen," as he used to call Patsy M'Dermot, and wanting her to marry some of the quiet dacent boys in the neighbourhood.'

'Had she many offers?' asked I.

'Is it offers, your honour?' exclaimed he; 'as many as you'd count apples on a tree. It's jostling one another to come near her they were; but faix she would have none of them. "Katty," says he, "why ain't you willin' to take up with some of the dacent boys in the neighbourhood, and not be always thinkin' of that idle chap that's gone out of the country? There's Mick Callan, and Jemmy M'Mahon, or Billy Cunningham, better than either—clean, neat, well-to-do boys, all of them; and why wouldn't you put up with one of them like an honest young girl as you are? There is two hundred goold guineas, as you well know, in the old purse up in the thatch, and sure you are as welcome as the flowers of May to take them—all for your own; and I'll give you the little place besides, dear, and all that's on it, if you'll only marry Billy Cunningham that's always askin' me after you; and Mr. Trench will put his name in the book instead of mine—that's little or no good now. And Katty, dear, I'd lie 'asy in my grave if I only knew you war married to Billy for good and all."

'"Whisht father, whisht," Katty would say, "I can't marry Billy Cunningham, or anyone else either; and you know the reason why well enough. And don't be tellin' me you can't lie 'asy in your grave, for I'd be sorry to think you

was walkin' and un'asy after you was buried. Father dear, I'll never lave you while you live, and sure that ought to be enough, and not talk to me about walkin' after you was dead." "Well," says the old man, "Katty dear, I'll never say any more about it, and you'll have my blessin' whatever you do, for you've been a good child, ever-and-all to me. So do what you plase after I'm gone, and it's not long I'll trouble you. The two hundred goold guineas is your own, Katty, and the house and place, and all I have; and plase yourself with it, and my blessin' rest upon you my darlin'; and my curse upon the man, whether he be far or near, that ever does you wrong." And with that he turned in his bed, for the poor man was mighty weak, and had been lying a couple of days before, and he just gave a long breath and never spoke after. The priest was sent for and did all the Church could do, and the doctor came soon after that, and said there was no more to be done in his line, and troth he said true enough, for he died that same night before morning.'

'A sad story,' said I; 'but I am glad he gave his daughter his blessing before he died. And so now she is off to America to seek Patsy McDermot that has taken so strong a hold upon her, though he hardly knew it himself.'

'Just that, Sir,' replied the uncle; 'I did my best with her, but it was all to no use. I even told her at the wake that maybe her father wouldn't stay 'asy in his grave if she left the old country; but it was all no use—she would go. She said she had his blessin', and he was sure to lie 'asy enough. She bid me not sell the little place till she'd write herself from America; as maybe, if she failed to ketch Patsy, she'd like to come back and die here. So I hope your honour will let the little farm rest awhile in my

name, and I'll pay the rent regular, and be a good tenant as ever her father was before.'

'Well, let it be so,' said I. 'The case is a singular one, and I would not wish to put it out of her power to come back and live and die here, if her mission to America should turn out a failure.'

'God bless you, Sir,' replied he; 'if anything would keep the old man 'asy it would be that. I don't think he'll ever walk when he hears that the little place isn't sold to a stranger.'

Catherine Farnan left Ireland soon after the above conversation, and she has never since returned. I heard that she did 'ketch' Patsy in New York. He was still a bachelor, and living the same pleasant idle life that he loved to pass in Ireland. Patsy, as might have been expected, succumbed to his inevitable fate soon after the arrival of Catherine. And though some of his former boon companions whispered that 'he was afeard of her' still; yet she wielded her power well; and with a firm and steady eye to the benefit of her handsome, though somewhat frolicsome husband. Her uncle announced to me with a triumphant smile, that 'she did ketch him in the end sure enough.' And doubtless—to use her own expression—'she gave it to him well.' She gave him all she had to give; her 'two hundred goold guineas,' her handsome person, and her sweetest smile, and above all, the true, chaste, unbounded love of a warm and faithful Irish heart. Patsy, I hope, still lives, a happy monument of what a spirited Irish girl can do when she sets herself in earnest about it.

CHAPTER XX.

GEASHILL MANOR.

IN the spring of the year 1857, a proposition was conveyed to me—in the first instance by Lieutenant-General Porter, the confidential friend of Lord Digby, and afterwards by Mr. Brewster (now Lord Chancellor of Ireland)—that his lordship was desirous of obtaining my services in the management of his extensive estates in the King's County. After some preliminary correspondence, it was arranged that I should meet Lord Digby in Dublin in the month of May with a view of settling details. An interview accordingly took place, when all matters being finally agreed on between us, I was installed as Lord Digby's agent. It was also arranged that my son, Thomas Weldon Trench, should be joint agent with me, and make the Castle of Geashill his residence.

The circumstances under which his lordship succeeded to this somewhat remarkable estate were peculiar. The barony of Geashill has long been in possession of the noble family of Digby. The bounds of the estate are co-terminal with those of the ancient barony, the whole of which belongs to Lord Digby. The barony, or estate, contains about 31,000 acres, 5,000 of which may be considered as deep red bog. The remainder consists of arable, pasture, and wood; of which last there is a considerable extent.

The Digby family derive their title to this estate from the only daughter of Gerald, Lord Offaly, eldest son of the

Earl of Kildare. This nobleman was born on December 28, 1559, and died 1580.* He had an only daughter, Lettice, who married Sir Robert Digby of Coleshill, in Warwickshire. He died in 1618; but his wife, Lady Digby, laid claim to the barony of Offaly, and the estates of her grandfather, the eleventh Earl of Kildare, as heir general; the cause, however, was decided against her; and in order to settle this difference, James I. created her Baroness of Offaly for her life, and awarded to her and her heirs under the Great Seal of England, on August 11, 1619, the manor of Geashill and the lands of the monastery of Killeigh, comprising the whole barony of Geashill, in the King's County. The castle—some remains of which still exist—was besieged by Lord Clanmalier, in the year 1642. He wrote several letters to Lady Offaly, in which he generally designated himself, 'Your loving cousin,' but in which he threatened to 'burn the whole town, kill all the Protestants, and spare neither man, woman, nor child,' unless the castle was surrendered to him. Lady Offaly, who was residing in it at the time, wrote some beautiful and remarkable letters to 'her loving cousin' in reply, declining to surrender her castle.† Lord Clanmalier then besieged it, but he failed in his attempt, and her ladyship was relieved by Lord Lisle, son of the Earl of Leicester, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, accompanied by Sir Charles Coote, with 120 foot and 300 horse. Soon after this, her castle being further threatened by the Dempsies of Clanmalier, her ladyship retired to Coleshill, in Warwickshire, where she died in 1658, and was buried in the church there. Her eldest son, Robert, was created Lord Digby of Geashill, from whom, by direct descent, the present lord derives his title to the barony.

* See the 'Earls of Kildare and their Ancestors,' by the Marquis of Kildare, p. 227.

† *Ibid.* pp. 230–232.

The late Earl Digby rarely visited his Irish estate, though it had been in his possession for upwards of sixty years. But he was a liberal and generous, though perhaps somewhat injudicious, landlord, and he intended well and kindly by his tenantry. Living in England in his splendid residence at Sherborne, surrounded by one of the noblest parks and finest estates in the empire, and having the full command of all that wealth could give, he believed that he was doing his duty by his Irish tenantry in granting them long and advantageous leases. Leaving them in other respects almost entirely to themselves, he took no further trouble, and enquired but little into the state of his property at Geashill.

But Earl Digby did not know, that in granting these advantageous leases for lives and periods extending far beyond the probable term of his own life, he was exceeding his powers, and making engagements to which his heir-at-law had solid grounds of objection. When, therefore, the late earl died, without having ever mentioned his cousin, the heir to his title and Irish estates, in his will—and having left his vast English estates, the princely family residence, and more than a million of money, away from him—the present lord, who was legal heir to the Irish property, most naturally and fairly considered, that although the late earl had a perfect right to leave his English domains and his vast sums of ready money to any person he pleased,* yet he had no right, moral or legal, to lease away his Irish property (settled as it was absolutely on the present lord—and in which he had only a life interest) for about two thirds of its real value.

Under these circumstances, Lord Digby determined to

* The late Earl Digby left his noble estate and domains in Dorsetshire, and the greater part of his vast funded property, to his nephew, Mr. George Digby Wingfield, now Mr. George Digby Wingfield Digby.

act upon his legal rights, and to break the leases which his predecessor had illegally granted, leaving the tenants to look for redress and compensation to the executors and successors to the enormous fortune of the late earl.

It may readily be supposed that circumstances so peculiar as these created considerable anxiety in the district. The tenantry, many of them large and respectable landholders, now learned, for the first time, that their leases were good for nothing in law. They had been duly 'signed, sealed, and delivered' to them under a full belief on their part that the contract was not only just and honourable, but also perfectly legal; and their feelings may be imagined when they found that they were suddenly threatened with a total loss of the property which they had always looked upon as secure. In this strait they naturally applied for compensation to the executors of the late earl; but they were told that no compensation could be granted, unless they could succeed in proving their title to it by law. Again they appealed to Lord Digby, urging, in terms of the most unaffected distress, the serious dilemma in which they were placed. But his lordship, though expressing deep commiseration for their position, could only refer them back again for compensation to the successors of the late earl, who had promised them, in the usual wording of their leases, that if they paid their rents, and fulfilled the other covenants therein enjoined, they should have and hold peaceable possession of the premises during the several lives or terms defined in their several leases.

Under these painful and perplexing circumstances, the tenants found themselves threatened with a double lawsuit. In the first issue they must appear as defendants against their landlord, the present owner of the estate, who had already commenced proceedings against them for the

recovery of the farms, which he contended had been illegally leased away. And in the second issue they must appear as plaintiffs in an action to recover from the executors of the late earl the full amount of compensation for the losses they might sustain by the breaking of the leases which had been granted.

Lord Digby did his utmost, as far as his personal influence and representations could go, to urge upon the executors of the late earl the justice of yielding to the tenants' claims; and in order to facilitate a settlement he had a valuation made, at his own expense, by a competent person, of the value of the several leases, according to the periods yet unexpired in each case. These amounted in the aggregate to a considerable sum, the total value of the leases having been estimated by an official notary-public at 30,600*l.*

Matters had now come to a most perplexing point upon the estate. Lord Digby had already commenced the necessary legal proceedings for the recovery of the leased lands; the executors had refused compensation, unless the right of the tenants to it was proved by law; whilst the frightened tenantry held meeting after meeting amongst themselves, unwilling to enter upon such extended lawsuits, against two such powerful antagonists, and yet seeing no loop-hole by which they could escape. Some were for fighting the matter out vigorously, others looked on in blank despair, whilst the majority agreed that at all events it was better to pay no rent whatever whilst these proceedings were pending.

It was in the midst of this complicated dead-lock that my services were engaged; and in undertaking the management of the estate under these difficult circumstances, I felt that I had assumed a very serious responsibility. My first step was to take up my quarters for some weeks

in the town of Tullamore, situated about a mile from the estate, so that I might be able personally to visit the tenantry, and ascertain, as far as possible, the real nature of their sentiments. I remained there for a period of six weeks, riding out almost every day upon the estate; and having made myself master of the facts, I arrived at the conclusion that the tenants were by no means anxious to go to law, but were actuated only by a *bonâ fide* desire to secure what all must admit they were entitled to—either a continuance of their leases, or compensation for the breach of contract. I drew out accordingly a full statement of the whole case to lay before the executors, exhibiting, in the strongest light I could, the deep injustice of refusing to give fair compensation (out of the vast fortune left by the late earl) to the tenants he had unintentionally misled by the granting of these illegal leases. I also urged upon the executors the serious responsibility they must necessarily assume if disturbances should arise, and lives be lost in attempting to enforce the existing landlord's rights. I endeavoured to show them that even under the most favourable circumstances, many difficulties were likely to accrue in the event of the raising of the rents consequent on the breaking of the leases; and if, in addition to these, the tenants were made to feel that a real injustice was being perpetrated, and all compensation for their loss refused, I had hardly a doubt upon my mind but that violence, bloodshed, and murder would be the result, from the moral responsibility attendant on which the executors could not altogether escape.

It happened that immediately preceding my appointment, Lord Digby had received official warning from the police, that a bloody death awaited him, if he pressed matters to issue with his tenants. This notice appeared as a further confirmation of my views, and justified my worst

apprehensions; and having called with Lord Digby on the police authorities in Dublin, and consulted for his lordship's safety with Sir Duncan Macgregor—at that time Inspector-General of Police in Ireland—I proceeded to London, armed with full powers by Lord Digby to negotiate matters with the executors of the late earl, and taking with me the threatening notice as a proof that in persisting to refuse justice to the tenants, they were exposing Lord Digby to very serious danger. I took with me also a statement of the notary's valuation of all the leasehold interests.

I found the executors—as I had expected—just and reasonable, and anxious to do what was right, but at the same time somewhat uncertain as to the *bonâ fide* claims of the tenantry. They appeared also to be apprehensive that if they once admitted any claims whatever by the payment of any sum in compensation, demands might be made to such an unreasonable extent, that it would be practically impossible to yield to them.

I endeavoured to prove to them, in the first place, that the claims of the tenantry for compensation for the loss of their leases were just and fair, and might perhaps, on trial, be proved to be legal also. And, in the second place, I assured them, that if they yielded the principle of compensation, no unreasonable demands should be made.

'How can we be sure of that?' enquired they. 'How can we be certain if we once admit any claim, without its being proved in each case by law, that numerous unjust demands may not be made? Some may require more than the fair amount, and others, who have no claim whatever, may then make demands to any amount they please. And what means have we, living in England, of ascertaining who the parties are who ought, or ought not, to be

paid, or the several sums which ought to be given to each?'

I saw at once that this was the main practical difficulty, and that there was no unwillingness to grant what was fair and just. So I produced the notary's list of leaseholders, showing opposite to each name the valuation of the several interests. The total amounted, as already stated, to 30,600*l.*

The executors looked carefully over the list, and then said, 'But suppose we were willing to pay these several sums as here stated by the notary, how can we be certain that we might not be subjected to a lawsuit in each individual case, to endeavour to enforce a larger sum from us than what is here set down as the value? or whom could we employ to distribute so large a sum of money fairly?'

Here was a new difficulty. But Lord Digby having conferred upon me full powers to negotiate for him, I undertook on his part, that if the executors would at once pay into Lord Digby's hands the full sum here stated as the value of the leasehold interest, viz. 30,600*l.*, his lordship would undertake to be answerable for the distribution of the same, and would also undertake to protect the executors, and defend any lawsuits at his own cost and trouble, which might afterwards be commenced against them for any further compensation or other claim whatever.

'That alters the whole aspect of affairs,' replied the executors; 'and if you are authorised to undertake this on the part of Lord Digby, immediate arrangements shall be made for the payment of the whole sum.'

I at once undertook that a formal engagement of this nature should be signed by Lord Digby, and armed with a written promise that the money should be immediately paid, I proceeded to Ireland to negotiate with the tenants. The lawsuit was to come on in a few days at the ensuing

assizes in Tullamore, Mr. Brewster, and other able counsel, having been specially retained for Lord Digby.

My interview with the tenants was of a more difficult and critical nature than that with the late lord's executors. The former had been so harassed and knocked about in appealing from one party to another, that they had made up their minds to abide by the issue of the coming lawsuit; and now an entirely new proposition was being laid before them, which some of them candidly acknowledged they viewed with much suspicion.

No time, however, was to be lost. The English witnesses had all been duly summoned, and only three or four days could intervene before they must start for Ireland to give evidence at the coming trial. The position was a critical one. I was most anxious on every ground to avoid a lawsuit. Even if Lord Digby should win, it would be a severe hardship on the tenants were he to break their leases unless compensation could be secured from the executors of the late earl; the effort to obtain this would entail another and perhaps a doubtful suit, and compensation money had only been promised on condition that no lawsuit should take place. If once a lawsuit were to begin, no one could tell where it would end, nor in whose favour it might be decided; whilst the estate affairs must inevitably run into confusion, no rents having been received or demanded from the leaseholders since the late earl's death. The tenants' blood was up now, and they appeared determined to fight.

After much anxious thought, I resolved to wait until the last moment possible, and then to call a few of the leading and most respectable tenants together, offer them severally such terms as might appear just and reasonable in each of their several cases, and try and induce them to sign a 'consent for judgment,' so that no lawsuit could then go on.

I accordingly waited until the very last day on which it was possible to have a conference before the lawsuit commenced; and having written to ten of the most influential tenants, I requested them to meet me at Geashill, to endeavour to make a final arrangement. All who had received my invitation attended. I opened the proceedings by explaining that the executors had handsomely consented to pay down 30,600*l.*, to be divided in such proportions amongst the leaseholders and their under-tenants, as Lord Digby deemed just and fair, in accordance with the value of their several interests. That his lordship had undertaken to distribute this fund, and to hold the executors harmless in any lawsuit which might be brought against them by the tenants; and that I now called on them to determine whether they would accept the several sums I was prepared to name to each, as a full compensation for the loss of his lease, or whether they preferred to go to law; in which latter case, if the lawsuit went against them, they could of course expect no compensation whatever. They appeared puzzled and anxious, and very uncertain what to do. At length one of them proposed that they should do nothing until they had had an opportunity of consulting the remainder of the leaseholders, of whom there were upwards of one hundred and twenty upon the estate.

'No,' replied I, 'you must come to a decision now; there is a messenger at the door on horseback, to ride to the telegraph station at Portarlington to stop the English witnesses coming over. This must be done within an hour, or they will start for Ireland, and then it will be out of my power to stop the lawsuit. You must determine *now*, each man for himself, or the lawsuit must go on.'

'Will you state the amount of money you will give to each of us?' asked one of the party.

'Certainly,' replied I, 'if you will each come separately with me into another room.'

They did so. I named to each an amount something less than the sum set down by the notary, partly as a reserve, lest any tenants holding under these leaseholders should afterwards require to be paid, and partly lest it might be supposed we were yielding to a legal claim already granted. After a little consideration, they all severally signed the 'consent for judgment.'

Just as I was about to send off the messenger to the telegraph station to stop the English witnesses, one of the cleverest of the tenants, who had always been doubtful whether he would sign or not, came forward and said,

'We have all now signed the "consent for judgment," and the lawsuit is at an end so far as we are concerned, and probably so far as the other leaseholders outside are concerned also, as they will naturally follow us; but may I ask, *where is the money you promised us?* I presume you have it with you in the house, for as yet we have nothing but the word of one who is a stranger to us, as our security for a sum amounting, even amongst those present, to about 10,000*l.*'

Here was indeed a difficulty. By an unfortunate mistake in the arrangements, the money had not yet been sent over from England, and I had of course no funds to meet a demand for such a large amount. I felt the position keenly; but knowing there could be no question ultimately about the full security of the case, I put the best face I could upon the matter, and freely admitting I had not brought the money with me, I pledged Lord Digby's honour and my own, that unless they were forthwith paid the several sums promised, no advantage should be taken of the document they had signed, and it should immediately be returned to each. I assured them at the same time that

I could not dare to appear before them on such a mission unless I had the sanction and pledge of an honourable man, like Lord Digby, that every engagement I made in his name should be redeemed.

'I fully believe you, Sir,' said one of the most upright and respectable of the tenants; 'and I think I speak the sentiments of most of us, if not all, when I say that we have not the slightest doubt the whole transaction is *bonâ fide*, and that we are as sure of the money which has been promised as if we had it now in our hands. We therefore thank you much for having been the immediate means of bringing this vexed question to so satisfactory a conclusion, and saving us from the very unpleasant position of being at law with our landlord or any of his family. We heartily hope and expect that all the other leaseholders will act as we have done, and we wish you a very good morning.'

I cordially shook hands with each; the messenger was despatched post-haste to the telegraph to stop the English witnesses; and this most difficult and critical matter was thus brought to a satisfactory conclusion. The other leaseholders, as had been anticipated, all followed the example of their chiefs, and the 30,600*l.* was in due course forwarded and divided between them and their under-tenants.

But the difficulties in which the Geashill Estate was involved had by no means come to an end. The tenantry, both leaseholders and others, had been allowed to run deeply into arrears. Many of them owed three, five, and some even up to ten and twelve years' rent; an amount which it is needless to say they were wholly unable to pay. Lord Digby was not entitled by law to any of these arrears, but a proposal had been made to him to purchase them from the executors, at a sum much less than their full amount. The actual sum due was upwards of 42,000*l.* an average of upwards of three years' rent. I earnestly

pressed upon his lordship the importance of purchasing these arrears. Were they to continue in the hands of the executors, I felt certain they could never be collected, and any attempt to do so (by them) would be met by the most determined resistance, and the barony would thus be kept in a flame. Besides, whatever they did collect would be to the impoverishment of Lord Digby's tenants, and thus be much to his lordship's disadvantage, and perhaps might also form an excuse for refusing the payment of all rent whatever. So strongly did I feel the importance of this point that I urged the purchase of these arrears at almost any price. At length a bargain was concluded with the executors at a rate which admitted of a large percentage being granted to the tenantry. It was arranged that the leaseholders (who were generally the least in arrear) should be required to pay up this arrear in full, out of the purchase-money allowed them as compensation for their several leases, and then be reinstated in their farms as yearly tenants, under a new valuation made generally over the whole estate; and that a reduction of seventy-five per cent. on the arrear should be allowed to all yearly tenants, on condition that they paid up the remaining balance of twenty-five per cent. in full.

It may be supposed that even this arrangement, liberal as it was, by no means suited the purposes of a large number of the tenants, who had been in the habit, by one contrivance or another, of evading the payment of any rent whatever. Accordingly, when thus pressed for a settlement of accounts, they answered they could pay nothing. And being loth to quit the lands on which they had so long lived free, they soon began to enter upon the old system so often practised in Ireland—to conspire with the Ribbonmen of other districts as to the best mode of resistance, and as to the means whereby they could best 'rid

the barony of the new tyrants who had come there, and who were bent on the extermination of the people!' Such were the terms in which the moderate demand for twenty-five per cent. of the whole amount of arrears due was characterised by some of the occupiers!

Conspiracies for various purposes became now the order of the day, and large subscriptions were set on foot to pay for the murder of myself and my son. But we were kept tolerably well informed of all that was going on, and more than once, by warnings from our secret friends, we escaped the murderous aim of assassins, who were lying behind hedges to shoot us.

Having passed through much danger, and run many risks of being shot, we resolved to take the 'bull by the horns,' and to eject from their holdings and banish off the estate a few of the foremost Ribbonmen, and face the danger as best we could which must be necessarily incurred thereby.

The announcement of our determination to carry this plan into execution fell like a thunderbolt upon the Ribbonmen. They never thought that we would dare to turn the tables on them, and act thus boldly on the aggressive, and they set on foot the most active operations to have us 'put out of the way.' But our friends were active also, and almost daily we received information of the proceedings of the conspirators. A young woman, from the county of Kerry, who had received some kindness from my family at Kenmare, was our chief informant. She lodged near the 'Cross Keys,' at that time a place of by no means good repute upon the estate, and she confided to us the names and bloody intentions of all the chief Ribbonmen—the various oaths she had heard them swear, and the expressions they had severally used—giving details concerning the language made use of by each, that left not a

doubt upon my mind but that her information was perfectly correct.

The Ribbonmen were well aware all this time that some one in their secrets must have given us constant information, but they were never able to ascertain who it was. Had they discovered the girl who told us of their proceedings, her life would inevitably have paid the forfeit.

At length the time arrived when the chief leader in the conspiracy was to be ejected. We had made full preparations beforehand, so that resistance would have been impossible, or at least utterly unavailing. A large number of assistants were in attendance to protect the sheriff in the execution of his duty. All were brought suddenly and unexpectedly to the ground; and before half an hour was over, or any row whatever could be got up, possession of the premises which the Ribbon owner had always sworn he never would surrender but with his life, was quietly taken by the sheriff, and handed over to the officer of Lord Digby.

The suddenness, the rapidity, and the determination to carry out the law against this notorious Ribbon conspirator, and drive him off the estate, had an immediate and most wholesome effect on the district. His prestige was completely gone. The premises he had so often sworn to defend with his life (they consisted of a ruinous thatched cabin and a few acres of worn-out land) were now no longer his own. His supporters felt that want of confidence in their leader which a failure almost always produces in Ireland; and we perceived that other Ribbonmen were quietly leaving the country. In a short time it was manifest that a complete change had taken place in the feeling of the barony.

Order was now rapidly restored. Several of those whom we well knew to be deeply involved in the conspiracy—

though we could bring no proof against them in a court of law—now came forward and expressed an earnest wish to resign their land and emigrate, if they could obtain a few pounds to bear their expenses from Ireland. This was at once given; and in a very short time after the ejectment against the chief of the conspirators had been carried into effect, the country had become perfectly tranquil; industry and peace became general, and have remained so ever since.

It may perhaps prove interesting to some, were I here to give a brief description of the nature of the improvements which have been carried out upon this estate, and which have converted it—formerly one of the most wretched and discouraging in Ireland, abounding in squatters, mud hovels, and moors saturated with water—into a district, which, although much undoubtedly still remains to be done, may even now bear a favourable comparison with many an English property.

No doubt the most unceasing opposition—which unfortunately is so frequently given in one way or other to any improving landlord in Ireland—was not withheld from Lord Digby; and during the first five years of his ownership of the estate, an amount of the most ingenious obstruction was made to his designs, sufficient to baffle the most earnest philanthropy. But Lord Digby was not discouraged; and having persisted steadily in his improvements, the operations of drainage and building and reclamation of land were gradually introduced and extended, until the estate became what it is now acknowledged to be by all who have seen it, one of the most industrious, progressive, and improved estates in Ireland.

Lord Digby's first efforts were directed to the getting rid of all the numerous squatters, who through previous neglect had been allowed to establish themselves over the

estate. Of these there were not less than from thirty to forty separate holders, none of whom had paid any rent for upwards of twenty years, and whose names were unknown upon the rent-roll. They lived in mud hovels, generally without windows, and a hole in one end of the roof, out of which stuck a piece of wicker-work like a badly made turf-basket, formed the chimney. They had usually squatted upon the sides of the roads, which in that district were in many places wider than necessary; and having cribbed a little 'garden' off the field of a neighbouring tenant, they lived—no one but themselves knew how—sometimes labouring, generally idle, and not unfrequently eking out an existence, scarcely raised above animal life, by petty thefts from the neighbouring farmers.

We found these people less difficult to deal with than we had expected. They were perfectly aware that they had a presumptive title, by upwards of twenty years' occupation, to the fee-simple of the soil on which their huts and gardens were placed. But the free admission of their undoubted right, combined with a little liberal dealing, soon brought them to ask as a favour that Lord Digby would purchase up their cabins. And by giving them sums varying from 5*l.* to 20*l.* we were able, in a short time, to induce them all to surrender possession, and to throw down their unsightly hovels. Most of the occupants who were able-bodied, or who had able-bodied families, were placed in new and comfortable cottages, at an almost nominal rent, and full employment was provided for them at drainage and other improvements on the estate. Many widows also, whose friends had built these huts, and placed them there to get rid of them, were gladly taken back again into their families, when they brought a sum of ready money along with them. Thus all were provided for in a more or less satisfactory manner.

The drainage and reclamation of the extensive district of wet land lying between Geashill and Tullamore was now entered upon with vigour. The tenants who had previously held these lands had, many of them, paid no rent for a long period. The lands were of the worst description of wet moor, lying on a barren and retentive sub-soil. The fields had been so cut up and subdivided that it became necessary to lay out all the lands anew, to level the old fences, square and enlarge the fields, and sink a deep drain, almost amounting to a 'canal,' to carry off the waters from this extensive district. All this was done with much care and accuracy; but the lands were naturally of so unfertile a quality that it became necessary to till them thoroughly to bring them to an even texture, and lay them down in good heart with grass seeds of first-rate quality. This was done at considerable cost; and turnips, potatoes, wheat, and oats were all grown most successfully, by means of a large application of Peruvian guano, generally seven to eight cwt. to the Irish acre. The crops were enormously large, and well repaid the cost of their production. The land was then thoroughly cleansed by repeated ploughings, harrowings, and pickings; and when fully pulverised and in proper order for the sowing of the grass seeds, it was laid down with rape, the grasses and clovers being sown along with the rape, and the whole afterwards fed off by sheep. The land was thus left in good heart and in a high state of productiveness.

Land treated in this manner—which had previously been difficult to let at 4*s.* per Irish acre—now readily brings from 25*s.* to 30*s.* per acre; whilst the whole face of the country—changed from sterility and waste, to rich and abundant pasture, well fenced, and divided into fields of sufficient size, and sheltered by belts of plantation—presents a most improved and gratifying appearance. These

and similar works, such as main or arterial drainage, being carried on simultaneously over various districts of the estate, have prevented any pauperism whatever; and since Lord Digby came into possession of the property there have been no unemployed labourers upon it. So great, in fact, has been the stimulus to industry, that the only difficulty now is to procure a sufficiency of hands both for the drainage and farmers' work.

But whilst extensive works of drainage have been and at this present time are being carried into effect, the dwellings of the farmers and labourers are by no means neglected. The houses of both were in general very bad—most of them composed exclusively of mud and thatch. Many of these have been replaced with well-built stone and mortar houses, roofed with slates and timber; whilst the existing houses and cottages have been much improved by windows, chimneys, &c., and numerous smaller dwellings for the daily labourers have been erected over the estate. All these works, thorough drainage, main drainage, buildings, and other improvements are still in active operation whilst I write, carried on under the immediate superintendence of a drainer who understands his business, and a well qualified clerk of the works in the building department; the whole having been previously planned and arranged by Lord Digby and his agent, and proper estimates and specifications of the works drawn out before the works are commenced.

In addition to the works I have briefly described above, Lord Digby has procured the best and most improved threshing machines to work upon his estate, as well as mowing and reaping machines, all of which are let out at reasonable rates for the use and convenience of the tenantry; and these, together with the crops grown upon the waste lands which were eminently successful, have given an impetus to industry and activity which is at present most

gratifying to witness. I may also mention that his lordship has three times, in three separate years, succeeded in obtaining the gold medal offered by the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland, for the best labourers' cottages in the province of Leinster; he held for three successive years the Duke of Leinster's challenge cup for the best built labourers' cottages in all Ireland, and he now holds the Hall challenge cup for the most extensive and best drainage in Ireland.

When I recollect the miserable condition of this estate not quite ten years ago—the tenants disaffected, industry paralyzed, Ribbonism rampant, and conspiracies to murder those who were most anxious for their welfare filling the minds of many of the peasantry—it is some consolation to find that steady and persevering determination, combined with kind and liberal treatment, will ever, in much abused Ireland, produce the most satisfactory results. And Lord Digby, and those who have worked under him, can look back with pleasure at having obtained a moral victory over what, at one time, appeared as dangerous and unpromising a subject, as any Irish landlord or Irish agent could possibly undertake to manage.

The expenditure on Lord Digby's estate within the last ten years, from 1857 to 1867, has amounted to a total of 32,795*l.*; out of this, 12,811*l.* have been expended on drainage and land improvement; 14,056*l.* upon buildings and repairs of tenants' houses, &c.; 3,362*l.* have been given as compensation for surrender of tenements, whereby numerous consolidations have been effected; 589*l.* have been expended on emigration of paupers; and 1,977*l.* on sundry numerous estate improvements, such as roads, bridges, and other general improvements not included in the previous amounts.* The greater part of this expen-

* See 'Evidence before Lords' Committee on Land Tenure Bill, July 2, 1867, by W. Steuart Trench, Esq.'

diture has returned a fair interest upon the outlay, and the income of the estate has been accordingly largely increased. The money expended on drainage and land improvement has been the most remunerative, and much of that expended on buildings has also brought a fair return. The average expenditure upon the estate within the last ten years has amounted to 3,279*l.* per annum.

Were this system more generally adopted on their estates by wealthy proprietors, it would be found to *pay well*, and Ireland would soon become a very different country from what it is.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REVIVAL.

THERE have been few more remarkable incidents, and none more characteristic of Ireland, than the religious 'revival,' which took place not many years ago in the north of the island, spreading from thence to the extreme south-west, and finding a somewhat permanent home in the midst of the city of Dublin.

It is difficult, in a work intended only as a record of facts, to give any account of a 'revival' which can be interesting to the general reader. At the same time, having myself seen much of the operations of the movement, and the circumstances and facts relating thereto having been naturally misrepresented and misunderstood, I conceive that a brief outline of what came under my own immediate notice, and that of others upon whose truthfulness and fidelity of description I could thoroughly rely, may not be uninteresting to those who wish to study Ireland in all her various phases.

The first wave of the so-called 'revival' arose about the year 1858, in a remote district in the extreme north of Ireland. A number of young men resolved to meet together for prayer, and they prayed to God very earnestly that he would send a revival of religion amongst them. Whether owing to this mode of commencing the movement or not, I leave it to my readers to determine, but beyond all question a deep anxiety began immediately to pervade

the minds of the people in that quarter about the state of their souls; and many of those who had never before entertained a serious thought upon the subject, became at once alarmed, and got into a real fright lest they should be going, as they described it, 'straight to hell.'

This overwhelming feeling, to which they gave the name of 'conviction of sin,' appears to have pervaded the minds of Protestants only, inclusive of members of the Church of England, as well as of the Presbyterian assemblies: the Roman Catholics, whether because they thought they were leading better lives, or from an entire separation of feeling on religious matters from the Protestants, were rarely affected by the movement.

It may readily be supposed that such a strong sense of sinfulness upon the mind, and such an anxious desire for the safety of the soul, was not long in drawing to their assistance men who undertook to lead those who were anxious about the matter into a position of safety; and many were accordingly forthcoming, who, having themselves, as they conceived, passed through stages of similar suffering and anxiety, professed to understand all its difficulties, and by their counsel and sympathy became a source of comfort to the afflicted.

Prayer meetings, on an extensive scale, were soon set on foot and organised in all the surrounding parishes and districts; sometimes in schools, sometimes in barns, sometimes in private houses, and not unfrequently in the open air. The people, men and women, young and old, flocked to these meetings in thousands. The most fervent and energetic prayers were offered up; persons who had never prayed before seemed urged on by some unseen power or influence, and poured forth the most eloquent and fervent petitions, without any apparent difficulty, or the least hesitation in expressing themselves. The excitement

seemed catching and on the increase, and yet all seemed perfectly truthful. It was excitement certainly, such as one may suppose to exist if a theatre or assembly-room was on fire, and it amounted almost to a panic; but it did not appear to be a fanciful excitement, such as people can sometimes work themselves into without any reasonable cause. The cause in this instance was manifest—the apprehension of going to hell if they died. This danger had previously been unperceived or disbelieved, and now it came upon them in all the vivid colours of a terrible reality. The way to escape was accordingly earnestly sought, as those only seek it before whose eyes a pit of horror is suddenly disclosed into which they believe they are liable at any time to fall. By degrees the excitement increased. The magnitude of the danger became to their minds more apparent and real, and the anxiety to escape more intense. Preachers of various denominations came forward professing to point out the way of escape, and were listened to with the most marked attention; whilst with one voice they declared the only way of safety, the only door of escape, the only path of light, to be an implicit trust and reliance upon the blood of Jesus Christ, applied to their souls through faith, as a sufficient atonement for sin, and as able to wash away their guilt.

The Roman Catholics looked on at all these proceedings in mute wonder and astonishment. They could not make out what it was all about. They had always considered their Protestant neighbours as prudent sensible men, and as a class, generally better educated than themselves, and the puzzle to know what new thing had seized upon their imagination was very sincere and perplexing.

By degrees the movement acquired such force and power that even the most careless of the clergy amongst the different denominations—Church of England, Presbyterian,

and Methodist—could no longer ignore its existence. Some of the most earnest amongst them, men who had long been endeavouring to awaken their flocks to a sense of their danger, now that they were thoroughly aroused, placed themselves at the head of the movement, with a view to control and guide it. Others opposed it with all their might, denouncing it as fanaticism and madness. But the movement spread and increased independent of either of these classes, and extending from parish to parish, and from town to town, acquired every day increased energy and force. The circumstances of the case were so peculiar, and the renown of the movement had attracted so much attention in other places, that numbers of steady, earnest, religious men came from far to witness the strange scenes which were in almost daily course of being enacted.

The description given to me by one of these, an elderly, quiet, unromantic man, who went fully determined to see and judge of things as they were, and for himself, may be interesting here to relate.

Having heard that the town and neighbourhood of Ballymena, in the county of Antrim, was one of those on which the movement had taken considerable hold, he went there in order to attend some of the assemblies; and observing a placard posted on the walls that a meeting would be held in a large school-house that evening, he resolved to go and see what went on.

The meeting was numerously attended, some 300 or 400 persons being present; and several who could not obtain access inside remained outside the doors. One Presbyterian clergyman, and two other men who appeared to be laymen, stood at the head of the room, on a little platform raised a few inches above the floor. Seats as closely packed as they could well be were ranged in rows opposite to the platform,

and these were filled with well-dressed, respectable-looking people, both men and women, generally of the farming and trading classes. The meeting was opened by the Presbyterian clergyman with an extempore prayer, and audible 'Amens' were frequently heard to issue from the congregation when any petition especially touching the feelings of those present was offered up. When the prayer was concluded, all rose from their knees, and a hymn was then given out and read aloud, each verse separately and clearly, by one of the laymen already alluded to; this the congregation sung with evident zest, almost every person in the room joining in the singing. There prevailed throughout the hymn a sort of triumphant determination to 'believe the gospel,' as if the singers recognised some strong power or influence present amongst them, urging them to disbelieve and reject it.

'*I do* believe, *I will* believe, that Jesus died for me,
'That on the cross He shed His blood, that I might happy be.'

This couplet was sung as a sort of chorus at the end of each verse of the hymn, and was repeated with a vigour that showed a firm determination on the part of the singers that hell itself should not shake them in the adoption of their creed.

When the hymn was concluded, the congregation was requested to be seated; and then a young man, one of the laymen, stood up, and began very quietly and in a low voice to address the meeting. He did not preface his discourse with any text. His bible was in his hand; but rejecting the ordinary conventionalities of orthodox preachers, he appealed at once to the consciences and hearts of his audience, and having brought vividly before them the importance of the question he was about to put, he asked them in plain and simple language—'were they saved?'

A dead silence ensued. No one spoke, but, the audience having been wound up by the prayer and hymn to a pitch of intense fervour, and being asked so home a question, showed considerable manifestations of uneasiness.

'Once more,' continued the preacher, 'I ask you, are you saved? You cannot escape the dilemma. You are at this moment either in a position of perfect safety, or in a position of dreadful danger. If you died now, your souls must either be saved or lost. Which is it? Are you bound for heaven or for hell? Are you now, now at this present moment, believers in Christ, washed in his blood, and safe, or unbelieving sinners, living without God, and without hope in the world, and lost?'

The voice of the preacher was fervid and earnest, and his action and demeanour that of one who firmly believed that a great crisis in the fate of those before him was at hand, and that their everlasting destiny might hang upon the reply which their consciences were able to give to this question.

He paused, and again there was a dead silence. At last some half-suppressed sobs were audible, and a young man apparently of a strong frame, fell convulsively into the arms of a companion near him, moaning and sobbing in a state of violent hysteria. The fact of one, well known to many of the congregation as a young man of singular firmness and courage, having been thus 'stricken' (as it was termed), became a general signal for others to give way also, and in a few minutes a most extraordinary scene presented itself. Men and women dropped from their seats moaning and sobbing, and, completely carried away by their feelings, gave themselves up to the most tumultuous expressions of sorrow and 'conviction of sin,' of lamentations for past misdeeds, and the most earnest supplications for mercy.

It was impossible to view such a scene as this and not to believe that the parties were in earnest and sincere. Several were in a state almost bordering on delirium. Others clapped their hands, and cried with loud voices for mercy; and many at last became so excited, and appeared to have hell so vividly before their minds, that their lips quivered, their eyes rolled, and they soon became quite insensible. A panic had evidently seized the congregation, and those whose nerves were naturally weak sank under it, and lost all control over their actions—much as if a cry of fire had been raised in a crowded building. It was like the after-scene of the children in the brewery at Kenmare, enacted amongst men and women.

The lay preachers and the clergyman now set themselves earnestly to calm the feelings of the audience, and by degrees, with the aid of much kind attention and manifestations of sympathy, order and decorum were in some degree restored.

When all was quiet, and nothing but a few convulsive sobs could occasionally be heard, the young lay preacher, whose words had had such effect, again stood up, and pouring forth a volume of the most affectionate solicitation to his audience to close then and there with the free offers of salvation which God now made to them through Christ, he urged them not to lose an hour in coming to the foot of the cross.

'Now is the accepted time,' cried he in an imploring voice, 'now is the day of salvation. Do not let Satan make any of you believe that God is unwilling to receive you. No matter how vile you may be, God is acting now in grace. You cannot tell how soon He may come in judgment. You cannot count with certainty upon your own lives for a single hour. There is no difficulty of access to Him now. God beseeches *you* to be reconciled to *Him*.

He has given His Son to die for you. He loves you even in the midst of your sins, for He says that "whilst you were yet sinners Christ died for you." He is ready and willing to receive you, polluted as you now stand, if you will only believe His gospel, and take Him at His word, that "Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life,"—that "He that believeth on Him hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."'

Such was the outline of his discourse. Once more he gave out a hymn, and closing the meeting with a short prayer, he dismissed the assembly, and all returned quietly to their homes.

On another occasion a scene still more remarkable was brought specially under my notice. The circumstances took place at Newtown Limavady, in the county of Antrim, and as I have had them in detail from the lady in whose place the scenes happened, and with her permission to publish them, I have no hesitation in stating them here in full.

A gentleman named Lancey, formerly a major in the army, had long been very earnest in his religious views, and conceiving that he might attract the notice of careless people by collecting 'a revival meeting,' he issued the following notice, an exact copy of which has been furnished to me. Major Lancey himself is now no more in this world.

'NOTICE.

'It is proposed, the Lord willing, to hold an open-air meeting, in the lawn of the lodge, to-morrow, the Lord's day, June 5, at half past three o'clock, P.M., when Mr. Lancey will give some interesting details respecting the *revival* at present going on in the County Antrim.

'Newtown Limavady. June 4, 1859.'

The meeting, in accordance with the above plain notice, was held, and whilst Major Lancey was speaking in the open air, two 'cases,' as they were called, took place, 'attended as usual by violent and irresistible screaming, the body prostrate and reduced to a helpless condition.'

On the next day another meeting was held, and six 'cases' of a similar nature occurred, and the interest seeming rather to increase than diminish, the meetings were continued throughout the whole week. On Wednesday about thirty persons were struck down. On Thursday all parties assembled in a public place of worship, but there was no 'manifestation' or visible effect produced. On Friday, on the lawn in front of Major Lancey's house, an astonishing 'manifestation' occurred, and not less than *one hundred persons* were suddenly and by an unseen power struck down to the ground, and Major Lancey, in an account of the circumstances published by him, and now before me, states that 'the lawn was literally strewed like a battle-field with those that were stricken down in this mysterious manner.'

On the following day not less than 5,000 to 7,000 persons attended the meeting, when another marvellous scene occurred, the lawn being covered with those who were 'stricken,' and the same strange 'manifestations' pervading the whole assembly.

'During the services on the following Sunday,' Major Lancey continues, 'the wonderful manifestation broke forth in two places of public worship in the town, and afterwards spread over the country with great rapidity. Persons were struck done everywhere; in the cabins, fields, highways, and hedges. And now the whole country is greatly reformed as to its outward conduct. Everywhere you may find persons meeting together, singing, praying, reading and rejoicing. The results appear to be abiding; men and

women who were abandoned characters, others well trained in all the morality of religion, are now alike rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven.' And he concludes the account by mentioning two cases in which 'wild young men who came to mock were themselves suddenly struck down, and brought under the same influence as the rest.'

It may naturally be asked by any plain and sensible man, 'What could have caused such strange physical effects as all admit were manifested on the occasions alluded to, and mainly amongst a staid and peculiarly unexcitable race, the Scotch Presbyterians in the north of Ireland?'

It is difficult to answer such a question, but still I think its solution may reasonably be found in the nature of the doctrines preached by almost all of those who addressed them. The salient principle, so to speak, in each of the addresses delivered on such occasions was, instant, free, unconditional, perfect and present salvation, proclaimed to all, no matter how sinful and vile their past lives had been, if they would only accept the pardon proclaimed, and believe on the blood of Christ as a full and sufficient satisfaction and atonement before God for all their manifold sins.

Such a doctrine as this, preached to those who had become really anxious about their safety, seemed almost to electrify the hearers. The proclamation of *perfect safety for ever*, to those who had almost made up their minds that they were altogether excluded from mercy, that the door of heaven was irretrievably shut against them, produced such a sudden reaction upon their feelings, that they became quite hysterical.

I must leave it to the physiologists to judge whether this be a rational explanation of the manifestations, which,

whatever be their cause, undoubtedly took place. Its correctness depends on whether those affected have a downright real belief in their danger, and an equally firm belief in the means of escape which was opened to them. *Subject to both of these conditions*, the tendency to hysteria is not so very surprising, and scarcely more unnatural than it would be to the condemned criminal when a sudden reprieve arrived.

A little pamphlet has been recently published by a country gentleman, a man of position and fortune in the county of Kerry, which states so accurately the main doctrines of the revivalists—doctrines which produced the sensations which have been described—that I quote the opening passage of the letter in full. Each of my readers will be able to form his own judgment as to whether the doctrines are true or false. But at all events they are clearly put, and there is no mystification about them. It runs as follows.

'There are, I suppose, very few persons in our country before whose notice the existence of an extraordinary religious awakening has not been brought within the past few years. Intelligent people have considered the matter, as it has more or less attracted their attention, and have, doubtless, formed their own opinions upon it. Some imagine the persons concerned in it to be well-meaning, but misguided and enthusiastic—suffering themselves to be carried away by the excitement of novelty; and in their religious orgies overleaping the restraint, not only of conventional ritualism, but even of the reverence and order inseparable from true, intelligent worship.

'Others have arrived at the conclusion that vanity and a spirit of innovation have misled some of the devotees while hypocrisy and some undefined idea of self-advancement have added numbers to swell the ranks of the new religion.

'To such as have not drawn their inferences from personal observation, it may not be uninteresting to receive a plain description of one great characteristic feature of this movement from one who has attentively studied it in all its phases. One great leading dogma is put forward by all these so-called enthusiasts, who hold that if there be an eternal heaven and an eternal hell, a living God and a judgment to come, it is the extreme of irrationality not to give Christianity the first place in their thoughts and estimation. It is no misty, uncertain theory: it is a downright, simple, unmistakeable statement, suited to the practical mind of the nineteenth century; and it is this—that *eternal salvation is a free, present, attainable, inalienable, imperishable gift.* In other words, that any man or woman in this world, be he or she the blackest sinner in it, may, in one moment, through God's grace, be justified for ever from every charge of sin; and may know, beyond all doubt, that he is justified; and may rest as sure of eternal happiness, as he is certain that *in himself* he never has deserved, and never will deserve, anything but eternal damnation.

'There is no mistake about the meaning of this statement. It may appear presumptuous and blasphemous; but it is, at least, intelligible to anyone of ordinary understanding.

'Now, if it be not true, it is one of the most daring forms of blasphemy and high treason against the Divine Majesty; for, if it be false, it is a doctrine which lays hold of the statute-book of heaven, and over-writes the laws of God's unalterable justice with rebellious words of human invention.

'But if it be true, you who read this paper, may, by God's grace, be saved before you lay it down, and saved for ever.

'Let us examine the authority on which this statement is put forth.'

For his proof of these statements, somewhat new and startling to the generality of mankind, I must refer the reader to the book itself.*

I have heard a story that upon one occasion the Bishop of London asked the celebrated actor Garrick, if he could explain how it was that he and his clergy failed to arrest the attention of their audiences, although they preached every Sunday of the realities of the world to come, whilst he, Garrick, filled crowded houses with the most rapt attention, although they knew perfectly well that all he was saying was fiction.

'The reason is very plain, my Lord,' replied Garrick, 'you deal with facts as if they were fictions; I deal with fictions as if they were facts.'

Manifestations of a similar kind to those described above have not unfrequently taken place on various occasions where powerful preachers set forth in plain and vigorous language the glories and terrors of the world to come. In Southey's life of Wesley may be found a description of physical demonstrations during the preaching of that remarkable man, almost exactly analogous to those which occurred in the revival meetings of the north of Ireland. In America, similar demonstrations under similar circumstances are not very uncommon. Mere eloquence, no matter of how high and exciting a nature, seems never to produce this result. These manifestations rarely occur except where plain men urge upon their hearers in plain and strong language the impending dangers of the next world, and point out a certain way of escape, *they themselves evidently believing whilst they do so that both are downright*

* Eternal Salvation: a Letter to his Friends by a Country Gentleman. 10 D'Olier Street, Dublin; and 9 Paternoster Row, London.

facts. This appears to be a necessary condition of these manifestations.

The remarkable scenes described above, extended over a great breadth of country, and could hardly be omitted from a description of the 'Realities of Irish Life.'

CHAPTER XXII.

FARNEY, 1865-1868.

A GREAT and notable change has passed over the Barony of Farney. Ribbonism, so far as I am informed, has ceased to exist within its borders. Industry, order, punctuality in the payment of rents, and a desire for, and tendency towards improvement, are the general characteristics of the day.

It is true that every now and then the course of peaceful advance is disturbed and retarded by that most odious of all odious calamities in Ireland, a contested county election. I know of nothing more detrimental to the peace and prosperity of a district, than an election for members of Parliament, conducted as such elections generally are in Ireland. The worst passions of the people are aroused to their utmost pitch on both sides, and sectarian animosity and virulence seem, demon-like, to possess the whole community. This is not the place to enter upon a discussion as to how all this might be avoided. It is enough to say that it prevails to such a degree as to embitter society on each occasion of its recurrence, so that we have scarcely had time to recover from the angry feelings of one election before another springs into its place.

I am well aware of the unhappy position of affairs in Ireland which renders these unfortunate differences almost natural and indigenous to the soil. The owners of landed property are in general Protestants. The occupiers are in

general Roman Catholics. And in many of the great questions of the day which come before Parliament, and to which the county representatives are called on to pledge themselves, the interests of the owners and those of the occupiers are considered by each class as antagonistic.

The landed proprietor feels that in the selection of a Member of Parliament he has only one vote; and no matter how large his interest or stake in the country may be, he has *constitutionally* nothing to throw into the scale against those who would overturn the most cherished institutions of the realm, except this unit vote. He sees with ill-suppressed indignation that the smallest holder and most ignorant peasant on his estate has by law the same power as himself, and, if uninfluenced by him, will probably make use of it in overturning all that he has been accustomed to hold sacred. The tenant again, on his side, maintains that if he pays his rent, cultivates his farm, and fulfils his other engagements with his landlord, the latter has no right to make any further demand upon him, and, backed by his priest, he resists all interference with his vote.

Such is the dead-lock—such the block-up—of the way. It is difficult to induce the noble proprietor or the highly-educated gentleman, the owner of, say 20,000*l.* per annum, with a stake and investment in the country which if capitalised might be worth half a million of money, to take up the position the Constitution has legally allotted to him, and to claim no more power in the selection of a representative than the most ignorant peasant on his estate, the occupier perhaps of only a few acres of worn-out land, without 10*l.* worth of capital in the world beyond his bone and sinew. And yet so it is. The priest on the one side urges vehemently the constitutional rights of the tenant; and the landlord on the other is indignant that all the influence he might naturally expect from his position,

education, and wealth, should, from this difference in creed, be rudely forced from his hands under the sanction of what he must admit to be the tenant's constitutional right.

But I digress; and yet it is well that the real position of affairs, and the feelings consequent upon them, should be clearly understood in England, as being the main causes of the violence, turbulence, and misery which occur at an Irish election.

Let us now change the scene in the barony of Farney from 1852 to 1865; and passing by the agony which has been caused on more than one occasion by a contested election, let us look at the present position of that district, which some years ago was the scene of such wide-spread disaffection.

In the month of May 1865, the Marquis of Bath visited his estates in Farney. His reception was such as a prince might be proud of. Nearly 50,000*l.** had been expended on his estate since he first came into possession, on permanent and substantial improvements. And the warm welcome of a warm-hearted and contented tenantry greeted him at every step.†

Having once overcome, and to a great extent eradicated, the Ribbon Confederacy by the means described in a former chapter, I resolved to forgive and forget all past misconduct, and never to hold those who had been concerned in Ribbonism, but who had at the time escaped punishment, as any

* The expenditure on this estate within the last sixteen years has been as follows. On drainage and land improvement, 10,155*l.* On various buildings, and repairs of tenants' houses, 23,829*l.* On compensation for surrender of tenements (whereby consolidations were effected), 2,831*l.* On emigration (2,459 persons), 7,988*l.* On sundry improvements not included in the above, 4,178*l.* Making a total of 48,981*l.*, within the last sixteen years. Yearly average, inclusive of emigration, 3,061*l.* Exclusive of emigration, 2,562*l.*

See Mr. Trench's Evidence before Lords' Select Committee on Tenure of Land [Ireland] Bill. 1867.

† In the Appendix will be found a detailed account of this remarkable visit of an English Peer to his Irish estate.

longer responsible, or in the shade of discountenance for the past. The people were very quick in perceiving this, and at last they seemed to consider they were safe in openly acknowledging their error, and confessing their sorrow for their past misdeeds.

Some curious instances of how completely they feel that these matters have been all forgiven, occurred a few months since, and may perhaps prove interesting to the reader.

I was riding not long ago (March 1868), in company with our old friend Paddy M°Ardle, to visit a distant portion of the Bath Estate, and settle some petty quarrels which had arisen amongst the tenants. My business led me to visit, amongst other places, a spring well, which had become a subject of dispute between two neighbours. The well was situated exactly in the middle of the fence which separated their several farms, and each accordingly claimed it as his own. There ought to have been no real difficulty in the case whatever, as the supply of water in the well was ample for the requirements of both tenants, but the quarrels which took place between them were nevertheless incessant. The last complaint which came before me was, that one of the parties had turned the drippings of the manure heap into the well, and that the other had then filled up the well with stones, and thus it became useless to both!

It appeared absolutely necessary therefore that I should go myself and decide upon this knotty point, as Paddy assured me he had done his utmost, but was quite unable to settle it. I went accordingly, and having heard the statement of each party, I settled the case to the satisfaction of both, by directing that the well should be covered over with a flag stone, but that each side should be open to the field belonging to each separate farm, and that the boundary fence (a stone wall) should be carried right over the top of the well in a straight line, so that neither could claim the

well as being specially his own. This arrangement was highly approved of by all parties concerned, and by the neighbourhood generally, especially as it gave a decided victory to neither of the contending parties.

But it happened that one of the men concerned in this frivolous dispute had allowed his temper to be so roused and irritated that he was led to confide to me the strangest stories concerning things which had long since gone by. The dispute about the well was enhanced by another dispute about some land, of which he complained that he had been unjustly deprived, and this caused many of the neighbours to side with one or the other of the disputants; and the man at last, desiring to revenge himself upon his opponents, related to me the following story, all of which I have reason to believe strictly true.

During the period when the Ribbonmen were most active in plotting the murder of myself and Paddy M°Ardle, sundry meetings were held in different tenants' houses to discuss the best mode of 'getting at us.' One house especially, in the Townland of L——, was a favourite place of resort; and many were accustomed to join company there and sit till midnight, or later, discussing this most interesting question. At length it was resolved to hold a final meeting of the choice spirits amongst those who could be most safely trusted, with a view to a night attack on Paddy M°Ardle's house.

A number of men, some twelve or fourteen, were accordingly selected, and were ordered to bring with them crowbars, sledges, and spades, as well as fire-arms; and the house in L——, having been chosen as usual for the place of rendezvous, a full attendance took place. But it happened that the elder brother of the disputant about the well was one of those selected for this expedition, and he let it ooze out to my informant, who was then a boy of some

fifteen or sixteen years of age, that the performance of a serious job was contemplated that night.

The lad, being most anxious to take part in this manly feat—the attacking and breaking into Paddy M'Ardle's house and murdering all the inmates—entreated his brother to allow him to join the expedition. His brother, however, would on no account permit it, and the disappointed boy determined to have his revenge. He watched the party from behind a ditch hard by, as they assembled one by one at the little cabin: some brought pistols, some pickaxes, some crowbars, and one of them brought a heavy sledge-hammer.

They sat on forms and three-legged stools around the fire, a good blaze having been made as the night was cold and stormy. The discussion was long and serious, as the intended attack on Paddy's house and the murder of its inmates was the boldest and most formidable overt act the Ribbonmen had yet contemplated. The boy watched them through a chink in the half-fastened window shutters. He saw the whisky introduced and circulating freely, as the favoured individuals inside discussed their plan of attack. It was arranged that at midnight they should issue from their den, and on arriving at the house, one of them should ask in a feigned voice, 'if he could see Mr. M'Ardle, as Denny Callan's house had taken fire nigh at hand, and all the neighbours were up stirring to put it out, and none would be so good at the work as Mr. M'Ardle himself'!

If the door was opened by Paddy to this false story, the others were to rush in and despatch him with pistols or spades, according as circumstances at the moment might enable them most easily to kill him. But should it happen that Paddy became suspicious of their designs and refused to open the door, then the owner of the sledge-hammer, a well-known blacksmith in the neighbourhood, was to use

his implement with vigour, smash in the panels of the door, and 'the crowbar brigade' being close at hand were to wrench it off its hinges, dash up to Paddy's room or find him wherever he might be, and not quit the premises until they left him a corpse.

Such were the arrangements which the ambitious youth heard discussed and settled, and he became half-maddened at the idea that he was not allowed to take part in so glorious an enterprise, from which it was expected the heroes would come out victorious and arrive at a high pitch of honour and credit in the country. The district, it seems, had at this time fallen into very low repute amongst certain classes of the people. Bateson, Mauleverer, and others had been murdered on neighbouring properties, whilst not even an attack had yet been made on anyone connected with the Bath Estate. Irritated at his exclusion from such an opportunity of distinguishing himself, and observing that the men were settling themselves for a short sleep previous to the hour of midnight when they were all to sally forth, this baffled boy resolved, as he could not join them, at least to dim their glory. Accordingly, he stole quietly home to his own cabin, which was situated a short distance off, and having seen his brother, on a former occasion, hide some gunpowder under the bed, he searched and found about a pound of it. This he wrapped up tightly in brown paper. He then got a long piece of cord, and having fastened the package of powder to one end of the cord, he returned to the place of rendezvous, and looking in through his former hole of observation he perceived that all were asleep, except one who had been placed as a sentinel. Some slept on the floor near the hearth, others on stools, leaning their backs against the wall, but the whole party had gathered themselves as closely as they could around the expiring embers of the fire. The boy went round stealthily to the back of

the cabin, and climbing up by means of a wheelbarrow upon the thatch, he cautiously let down the package of gunpowder, by means of the string, upon the coals inside, and leaping nimbly to the ground again, he darted off a few paces and ensconced himself behind a high ditch to watch the result in safety. The brown paper in which the parcel had been tied was tolerably stiff and strong, so that half a minute or so elapsed before any result took place, and the package having been let down gently through the chimney, not the slightest idea of what was going on had occurred even to the sentinel himself, much less to the sleeping Ribbonmen. Suddenly, however, they were roused from their slumbers; an explosion of a terrific nature took place. The cabin, consisting only of one small room, felt the full force of the shock. The roof was blown into the air; the sleeping Ribbonmen were hurled about the floor and sent rolling to the other end of the room. One or two who were sitting up had their faces blackened and scorched, whilst the sentinel was tumbled over and dashed against the opposite doorway. The walls were burst out and split; and, in short, no bombshell, exploding unexpectedly in the midst of an enemy's camp, could have produced a more appalling effect.

The astonishment of the conspirators may be imagined. They rushed into the open air, each entreating the other to tell him what had happened; and none of them being able to explain it, they concluded that the police had come upon them and blown them up as they were sleeping. Away, therefore, they ran in a sudden panic, each believing that a policeman was close at his heels; and they never stopped until, out of breath and weary, they found themselves in different directions nearly a mile from the scene of the explosion. Observing, however, that no pursuit took place, they plucked up courage, and coming together again in twos and threes, they endeavoured to ascertain what had

occurred; but all attempts at doing so were vain; so they commenced accusing and abusing each other, each swearing (most happily for Paddy!) that he would never join such villians again in any enterprise of the sort.

The mischievous young scoundrel who had occasioned all this turmoil, ran at full speed towards home immediately on the explosion taking place, and then came out of his cabin again to meet his brother, pretending to have been frightened at the noise, and enquiring what was the matter. When informed of the occurrence he expressed the greatest surprise, and immediately asked where the blacksmith had left his sledge.

'Why do ye want to know?' returned the blacksmith, by no means pleased that he should be singled out from amongst the other conspirators, even by this impudent boy.

'Because,' replied the lad, '*your name was on the handle*, burnt in by yourself; and as sure as you're alive, if the police get hold of it, you'll swing by the neck for it yet.'

'Blood alive!' exclaimed the blacksmith, 'what will I do at all?'

'Away! back with you, life or death, and get the sledge handle any way, or else ye'll surely be hanged,' urged the boy.

Back stole the wretched blacksmith, going as he thought almost into the jaws of death, to recover the tell-tale sledge, whilst the boy laughed in his sleeve at the terror and confusion he had occasioned. He was not discovered.

Such was the story detailed to Paddy M'Ardle and myself a few months since by the very man who when a boy had performed the exploit, and we were shown the spot on which the cabin had stood—now levelled and sown with potatoes—and where these strange proceedings had taken place. But the oddest part of the story consisted in the fact that it was all told now under somewhat similar

feelings to those which had originally urged him on to perform the deed—namely, vexation at a fancied wrong. He had quarrelled about the well, and he had quarrelled about the piece of land, which he maintained had been unjustly taken from him by another family; and to bring this family and their friends into disrepute with me, he had laid open the whole of that night's proceedings as I have detailed them above, giving me the names and residences of all the parties concerned, and not shrinking from telling even his own part in the transaction! He dared not have done this a few years ago.

Another incident, which happened about the same time, may perhaps be worth recording. An artisan who has long been, and still is, employed in the works upon the estate, applied to be accepted as tenant to a nice little farm which had recently become vacant, and was well circumstanced and suited to his purpose. As he had been long in the employment, I consented to accept him as tenant, though I well knew he had been one of those who had formerly conspired against my life. We had made it up, however, long since, and had been good friends for some twelve or fourteen years. I had directed the man to come to my private residence to make arrangements about the farm; and when all was settled, as I passed out of the house with him, I heard my daughter playing on her harp in the drawing-room.

'Would you like to come in and hear the young lady play?' I asked.

'Bedad, I would, your honour, if it would'nt be making too bold,' replied the man.

I took him in to the drawing-room at once, and having requested my daughter to play a few airs on the harp which I thought would please him—such as 'Patrick's day,' and 'Garryowen,' the man was leaving the room in high delight

at the music and the compliment thus paid to him, when I said suddenly to my daughter,

'Do you know who this man is?'

'No,' she replied, 'I don't recollect having ever seen him before.'

'This is ——,' said I, giving the man's name in full; 'and you will be surprised when I tell you that this is one of the old conspirators against my life when the times were disturbed some few years ago.'

My daughter looked with wonder at us both, scarcely believing that I spoke in earnest as she saw a half smile upon my face.

'It is true, I assure you,' I replied, in answer to her incredulous look.

'Well indeed now,' urged the man, appealing to my daughter, 'what his honour says is all true enough; but sure he knows well I wasn't as bad as others; and any way there is not a man on the estate would be less willing to see a hair of his head touched now, but sure none of us knew him then.'

I could not help laughing outright at the curious innocence of the man's confession, so I only replied,

'Well, if you were a bad boy then, I hope you will be a good boy now; and as you escaped hanging then, I'm not going to remember it now. Perhaps you thought I didn't know of your proceedings, but I have been aware of them these twelve years past. I believe you are a changed man, so you shall have the little farm.'

The man bowed and retired, and is now in possession of the holding.

One more recent incident, and I have done.

Scarcely six weeks ago, in May 1868, I was riding with two young friends over one of the most distant portions of the Bath Estate. My business led me to visit a man's farm

which he complained was too highly rented. Having examined the land, I was passing out of the last field when another odd-looking man, unshaven and ragged, came up to me, and told me that his rent needed reduction as much as his neighbour's. I replied that he had made no formal application to that effect, and I could not therefore at present entertain his case.

'Well, your honour,' said the man, 'I wouldn't trouble you, only I wouldn't like to see this chap's rent reduced and I not get the same favour.'

'But he does not ask it as a favour,' I answered; 'he says his land is too highly rented, and he wants me to examine it myself. I have formed my own opinion on that matter, and he shall know it when he comes to the office next Thursday.'

'Don't mind a word that blackguard says, your honour,' returned the ragged man; 'he's the biggest villian in the country, and it's well he knows it's too cheap he has the land entirely!'

It may well be supposed that such an onslaught as this set the disputants at high words at once, and to the astonishment of myself and friends these wordy warriors fired into each other's characters with the most remorseless severity.

'You are the biggest villian in the barony!' cried the ragged man; 'you know well I had ye in Monaghan gaol for six months: you thief of the world, you stole my property, so you did!'

'You're a liar!' shouted the other; 'ye well know ye wrongfully accused me, and perjured yourself when ye swore against me; and anyhow my charācter is better than yours, let his honour ax the priest or any dacent man in the country.'

'I'll hould ye a five-pound note agen that,' cried the

ragged man. 'I'll bet ye a five-pound note this minute, and let his honour hould the stakes, that my charācter is far preferable to yourn.'

'*Five pounds!*' returned the other contemptuously, 'where would the likes of ye get five pounds? and ye boasting there to get his honour to hould the stakes! it would be fitter for ye to give five ha'pence to some ould tailor and get your clothes mended! Five pounds indeed!'

'I'll prove it!' shouted the ragged man in a high state of excitement; 'I'll prove it to his honour this minute!' and rummaging amongst his rags, he pulled out an old greasy purse, and taking from thence two five-pound notes, he walked up to me in a majestic manner, and requested me to hold one of them as the stake in this characteristic wager.

Of course I declined; but the whole scene was so absurd that it was impossible we could help laughing; when his antagonist, seeing the cause going against him, and that the stakes were really forthcoming, became excited beyond measure, and at last losing all control of himself, he said—

'Ye are a *public robber*, so ye are, and I could tell that of ye which if his honour knew, he'd banish ye off the estate, as he did better men than ye are.'

'I defy ye!' returned the ragged man; 'say what ye like, only down with the five pounds first, and let his honour hould the stakes.'

'Why do you call him a public robber?' I enquired, having observed that the man laid particular stress upon this unusual description of his ragged opponent.

'Because he chated the public,' replied the man.

'How so?' I asked again.

The man gave a look at his ragged neighbour to see if

he shrank from what he was now about to tell; but his look was answered by a bold defiance.

'I defy ye—do your worst now, if ye can.'

'Then I'll tell his honour all about it,' said his opponent. 'That same public robber there before ye, put down his name for a one-pound note to get Paddy M^cArdle shot, that's alive and well now; and when them that was to do the job came round to him afterwards for the money to pay the heavy expenses they were under, the thief of the world only buttoned up his pocket, and refused to pay a farthing; and *that's* why I call him a public robber!'

'*And why would I pay them a farthing, the rogues that they were, when they did'nt do the job?*' shouted the ragged man. 'Sure isn't Mr. M^cArdle safe and sound this minute—long life to him and long may he reign, himself and his big white horse! May I never but I wouldn't for a five-pound note this minute that they got him down, and *yet the thieves of the world wanted me to pay them for shootin' him when they never done it all!* That's a quare way of doing business. Pay the one-pound note indeed! In troth I'll pay nothing of the kind!'

Having thus fully admitted his original engagement, but indignantly repudiated the obligation his opponent wanted to fasten on him, inasmuch as the contract had never been performed, he put his two five-pound notes quietly into his purse again as if he thought this awkward claim might possibly be revived, and walked away with the air of an indignant and injured individual.

Those who would live happily and peaceably in Ireland, of whatever rank or creed they be, have much to forgive on both sides.

CONCLUSION.

POSSIBLY some may ask why the faults of my country should have been brought to light in such undraped simplicity as in the preceding tales?

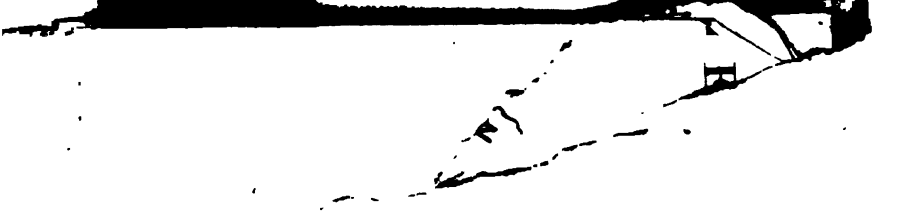
The reply is simple. All admit that remedial measures are required for Ireland; and that until her actual condition is known, and her people understood, these are not likely to be well devised. It would, therefore, be manifestly unwise, as well as unkind, to conceal her real condition and her real feelings. But neither have the virtues of her people been concealed. Where can be found more true, and tender, and devoted love, than in the Irish girl—of which Mary Shea and Alice M'Mahon are samples? And where more manly affection and fortitude than in their lovers? Even the untamed Joe M'Key was a hero in his way, and by no means devoid of noble qualities.

We can scarcely shut our eyes to the fact that the circumstances and feelings which have led to the terrible crime of murder in Ireland, are usually very different from those which have led to murder elsewhere. The reader of the English newspaper is shocked at the list of children murdered by professional assassins, of wives murdered by their husbands, of men murdered for their gold. In Ireland that dreadful crime may almost invariably be traced to a wild feeling of revenge for the national wrongs, to which so many of her sons believe that she has been subjected for centuries.

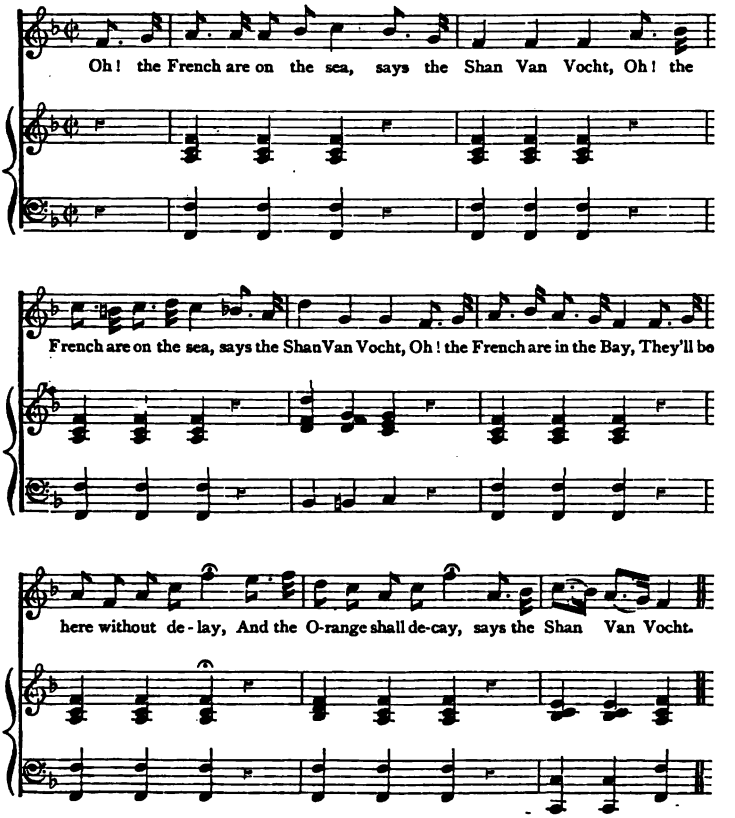
The cry from Ireland is invariably for '*justice.*' But to ascertain what is just we need, first, a knowledge of the facts of the case, and then, an unbiased judgment to deal with them.

Many think that the same measure should not be meted to the two great parties into which Ireland is now mainly divided—the Protestant rich and the Roman Catholic poor. Some think this because they look upon the wealthy Saxon and prosperous Protestant as an invader and interloper who, notwithstanding the prescription of three hundred years, ought now to be deprived of his possessions, and expelled from the soil of Ireland. Others shrink from treating both sides alike because they look upon the Roman Catholics as rebels both by nature and by creed. Can Ireland look with hope or confidence to either of these extremes? Surely a line of justice to both parties *exists*, and surely it may be found without closing the ear to the claims of the one class, and without inflicting upon the other the very wrongs of which the first complains.

Should the foregoing records contribute in any measure to the attainment of real justice to Ireland, one great object in their publication will have been accomplished.



APPENDIX.

THE SHAN VAN VOCHT.

Oh! the French are on the sea, says the Shan Van Vocht, Oh! the
French are on the sea, says the ShanVan Vocht, Oh! the French are in the Bay, They'll be
here without de-lay, And the O-range shall de-cay, says the Shan Van Vocht.

The following account of the visit of the Marquis of Bath to his Farney Estate was published in a local journal, and affords a true record of the change of feeling which had taken place upon the property, between 1852 and 1865.

VISIT OF THE MARQUIS OF BATH TO HIS FARNEY ESTATE, IRELAND.

'CARRICKMACROSS, Tuesday, May 16, 1865.

'To-day was what might aptly be termed a special carnival in the quaint old town of Carrickmacross. It being generally understood that this was the first visit of the Marquis of Bath to his estates in Ireland, nothing was spared on the part of the inhabitants and his tenantry of the surrounding country to render everything worthy of the occasion, and from the active preparations, which for some time past have been going on, it was evident that a true Irish welcome was in store for his lordship. Indeed to do justice to all parties concerned, the reception was one that cannot be forgotten by the noble stranger, for it was at once unmistakeably cordial and sincere. From an early hour the town presented an appearance such as it rarely has occasion to do. The triumphal arches, with appropriate devices, the floating banners and gay streamers were looked upon by the old people with wondrous eyes, for it was not every day that such sights broke in upon their quietude. All joined, however, in the rejoicing, when it was known that their landlord, who had already endeared himself to them by his kind and benevolent actions, was about to pay his first visit to Ireland. A holiday being the order of the day, everything in the town looked animated. The principal buildings and houses, as well as those belonging to the humble classes, were decked out with laurels and evergreens, arches were erected from either side of the road

entering the town, and conspicuous amongst the many inscriptions was the old Irish "*caed mille failthe.*"

'At four o'clock precisely, his lordship alighted at the Inniskeen railway station, and was received by W. Steuart Trench, Esq., and several other influential gentlemen. Having proceeded to the "Broken Bridge" in a carriage and four handsome greys, the Marquis was met by his tenantry, who greeted him with loud cheers, and immediately formed into procession, marching into the town in great order. The scene was considerably enlivened by the performance of the musical band. The entrance into the town was one which was characterised by those marks of welcome which a loving people never fail to bestow on the deserving. At this time the streets were thronged to a great extent, so much so that in some parts there was scarcely room to pass. His lordship having adjourned for some time to Essex Castle, proceeded to the spacious Market Hall, where it was intended the address should be presented. The place was adorned with flags and festoons, and everything appeared appropriate to the occasion. At the head of the hall a throne was erected, and superb carpets were strewn on the floor. Shortly after six o'clock the noble Marquis entered, and immediately a large number of the people availed themselves of the space in the body of the room, where a hearty cheer had been kept up for a long time.

'The following gentlemen comprised the deputation:—

'Rev. Dr. M^{c}Mahon, Rev. Mr. M^{c}Cullagh, Rev. Mr. Smith, H. Kernan, Esq., T. M^{c}E. Gartlan, Esq., E. Gibson, Esq., T. Johnston, Esq., Captain Leslie, C. Kenney, Esq., T. Shaw, Esq., J. Reid, Esq., Ham. M^{c}Math, Esq., Peter M^{c}Caul, Esq., J. Marron, Esq., Messrs. J. Duff, J. Maguire, J. Cunningham, W. Cox, P. Agnew, Peter Byrne, E. Woods, Patrick M^{c}Mahon.

'Thomas M^cEvoy Gartlan, Esq., then read the following address:—

'"TO THE MOST HONOURABLE THE MARQUIS OF BATH.

'"We, the tenants of your lordship's estate in the Barony of Farney, Ireland, beg leave to assure you of the deep pleasure and gratification we feel at seeing you amongst us, and we offer you a cordial and respectful welcome.

'"The connection that we and our ancestors have had as tenants with your lordship and your noble house has been of long standing, and we trust it may continue uninterrupted, and with satisfaction and confidence on the part of both landlord and tenant.

'"We venture to believe that a personal knowledge of the character and condition of your tenantry and your estate may induce you to repeat your visit, and the fact of your lordship being allied to a family high amongst our Irish nobility tends to strengthen this hope.

'"Whilst surveying the fruits of your own liberality in the improvements which have been carried out by your agent, Mr. Trench, with that energy and intelligence for which he is so eminent, we hope your lordship will also see cause to appreciate the improvements which have been effected, remotely as well as recently, both by our predecessors and ourselves, and we trust that in the present cultivation of the soil your lordship may recognise indications of industry and perseverance.

'"We have experienced from your lordship and your ancestors much kindly consideration, not only in the relations which subsist between us as landlord and tenants, but also in the ready response by which any claims for contribution to local purposes, charitable or otherwise, have been met; and thus, as well as in the liberal expenditure which you have directed to be made in the judicious

improvement of your estate, your lordship, though absent, has not been unmindful that 'property has its duties as well as its rights.'

'"We sincerely hope that the cordial feelings of mutual kindness and confidence which now exist between your lordship and your tenantry may long continue to prevail; and again welcoming you to Farney, and tendering every kind wish for the welfare and happiness of yourself and your noble family,

'"We have the honour to be, my lord, your lordship's faithful friends and tenants.

'"Signed on behalf of the tenantry.

'"THOMAS M^cE. GARTLAN,

'"Chairman of Public Meeting."

'His lordship replied as follows:—

'"GENTLEMEN,—I thank you for the kind welcome with which you have met me on this my first appearance amongst you.

'"I thank you for the respect with which you are pleased to speak of the memory of those who have gone before me.

'"I sincerely hope that the happy relations which at present subsist between me and my tenants may long continue on as satisfactory a footing as they now are; no effort on my part shall, I assure you, be wanting so to maintain them, and to deserve that good will and kind feeling with which you are now pleased to receive me. I regret that important engagements will render my stay here so short. I hope, however, before long to renew my visit, and make that intimate acquaintance with the country and its inhabitants, which both so well deserve.

'"Lady Bath deeply regrets that the state of her health has prevented her accompanying me on this occasion: she will, I trust, be with me here before long; the recollections of her own home are so pleasant and still so recent that she would wish to let no opportunity escape her of extending her acquaintance among the people of her native land.

'"I am glad that your testimony justifies the entire confidence which I have and do place in Mr. Trench, whose character and abilities are too well known to need any praise of mine. I feel that during my necessary absence he has been a faithful representative of my wishes and intentions. In the management of affairs here, while protecting the interests of my property, he has been the advocate of just and liberal dealing with those who reside upon it, and has, I assure you, been ever most willing to bear testimony to all that the estate owes, to the past as well as present enterprise and industry of the tenants.

'"Again thanking you for the cordiality of your welcome, I trust that our mutual relations may long subsist on the friendly and pleasing footing I now find them."

'Mr. Trench then introduced several of the tenantry to his lordship, who warmly shook hands with them, and expressed himself highly pleased with the reception which had been accorded to him.

'His lordship, accompanied by Mr. Trench, then withdrew amid loud expressions of welcome.

'Shortly after nine o'clock the whole town was brilliantly illuminated. A series of fireworks were exhibited opposite the Court-house, and about half-past nine the town of Carrickmacross could be compared to nothing but a glare of dazzling splendour.

'When all had subsided the people retired with that order and decorum which had characterised the proceed-

ings all through, proud in themselves at the reception which they had given to a worthy and benevolent landlord.

WEDNESDAY—DINNER TO THE TENANTRY.

'On Wednesday last the tenantry on the Bath Estate were entertained at a dinner which took place in the Market-house of Carrickmacross. The reception which had been accorded to the noble marquis on his entry into the town the day previous was all that could have been hoped for or desired. The spacious Market-house presented a very gay appearance, indeed the whole interior of the building was one scene of attractiveness, inasmuch as no available space was left unoccupied where taste and beauty could be displayed, Mrs. Trench and Mrs. Grimston having kindly undertaken the arrangements. At half-past six o'clock his lordship, accompanied by his agent, W. Steuart Trench, Esq., entered the hall amid the loud greetings, of welcome from his assembled tenantry, of whom there could not have been less than 250.

'Over the head table was suspended a coronet worked in ivy leaves, the production of Mrs. Trench's hands. Beneath this were the branching antlers of the ancient Irish elk, which had been found on the estate. A large B stood out in bold relief between them, while underneath crossed banners, with the arms and motto of the Marquis, had an exceedingly pretty effect. At the other end of the room was another elk's head, over which were, in large characters, worked in green leaves, the words "Erin go bragh." The side walls were similarly decorated, while from the ceiling drooped the banners of all nations, their rich hues and various devices giving an air of richness and elegance, and, at the same time, festivity to the apartment.

'The dinner was of the most *recherché* character; it

reflected every credit on the parties concerned. The wines, too, were of the most excellent quality, champagne flowed in abundance, and all the delicacies of the season were displayed along the table with great taste and elegance, eliciting as it did the admiration of many present.

'The chair was occupied by the Most Noble the Marquis of Bath.

'To the right of the chairman sat H. M'Math, Esq., the Very Rev. Dean M'Mahon, — Jackson, Esq., W. S. Trench, Esq. (his lordship's agent). On the left were George Morant, Esq., Captain Foster, Thomas Johnston, Esq., Longfield; E. Gibson, Esq., Thomas M'E. Gartlan, Esq., Moynalty, Hubert Kernan, Esq., Cabra, Charles Kenny, Esq., Rocksavage, Rev. William M'Cullough, Rev. Mr. Smith, J. Reid, Esq., Thomas Shaw, Esq., Captain Leslie, Rev. Mr. M'Cormick, Rev. Mr. Byrne.

'The vice-chair was occupied by D. T. Grimston, Esq. We also noticed—Peter Hoey, Esq., P. Dowdall, Esq., "Dundalk Examiner," Dr. Taggart, C. Townsend, Esq., Messrs. Fitzmaurice, Mahony, Gartlan, jun., John Duff, P. Ward, J. O'Hagan, Mr. Trench, jun., Mr. Lang, Mr. H. Quinn, Mr. J. Marron, &c., &c.

'When the dinner had been discussed and the cloth removed—

'The noble chairman, amidst loud and enthusiastic cheering, rose to propose the usual loyal toasts, which were drunk with every demonstration of respect and loyalty, the band playing the National Anthem, and "God bless the Prince of Wales."

'His lordship, on rising to propose the next toast, said:—Connected as he was with Ireland through his estates, and connected also by stronger and dearer ties (cheers), he felt he could not do otherwise than take a warm interest in its welfare, or leave to others to propose the next toast—

namely, "The health of his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, and prosperity to Ireland" (hear, hear). Whatever might be their opinions on politics, there was no one who would refuse to admit the individual merits of the present Lord Lieutenant (Lord Kimberley) and his predecessors, Lord Clarendon and Lord Carlisle.

'The toast was drunk with cheers, the band playing "St. Patrick's Day."

'The chairman, in proposing the next toast, said they had drunk to the prosperity of the country generally, and he hoped they would allow him to give them next the welfare and prosperity of that especial district. If ever he had taken an interest in his estates, surely he would do so now after having received so kind and hearty a welcome, which had been beyond his utmost expectations (cheers). It was indeed difficult for him to express his feelings of gratitude towards them for the manner in which both that day and the day previous they had accorded him so welcome a reception. He hoped they would allow him to propose the next toast, which was "The Prosperity of Farney," coupling with it the name of Mr. M'Math, who was the largest tenant landholder on the estate.

'Amidst loud cheers this toast was fully honoured, the band playing "Nora Creina."

'Mr. M'Math returned thanks in eloquent and suitable terms.

'Mr. Thomas M'Evoy Gartlan then rose to propose the health of "The Most Noble the Marquis of Bath." He said—Mr. M'Math had almost exhausted the subject connected with the agriculture of the country, but he wished to refer to one of equal importance. It could not fail to be satisfactory to his lordship upon this his first visit to Ireland to find amongst his tenantry that one material qualification for prosperity existed amongst them. They

enjoyed social peace and harmony. They were devoid of all sectarian dissension (hear, hear). Mr. Gartlan continued in a highly interesting speech to contrast the past and present state of the Barony, and concluded by referring to the visit of his lordship's grandfather to the property, and said he believed he was a link between the past and the present, and as such he was only exercising the privilege of old age, and he would, therefore, call upon the company to drink the health of their noble landlord, the Marquis of Bath.

'The toast was drunk with loud and prolonged cheers.

'The noble Marquis, on rising to respond, was cheered most lustily. He said at the commencement of the evening he felt a considerable amount of diffidence and hesitation in speaking for the first time in so large an assembly. He felt assured he was not asking them to believe too much when he stated that he felt deeply thankful for the manner in which they had received the toast proposed by Mr. Gartlan, and also to the inhabitants of Farney generally, for the warm and cordial reception they had given him on entering the town the day previous (hear, hear). The reception was more enthusiastic than he had expected, and he could not help feeling it was the more sincere when he remembered the unpropitious state of the weather. As one goes through life there were few who had not felt how much easier it was to make new friends than to retain the affections of old ones. He felt he had not lost, and he hoped he would long continue to retain, the friends by whom he was surrounded, and when he considered their kindness and expressions of regard towards him that day, and the evening before, he felt he was fully justified in feeling as though he were amongst old and valued friends (loud cheers). Mr. Gartlan was good enough to couple Lady Bath's name in the toast

with his. In her name he hoped they would allow him to offer them his grateful thanks for the manner in which they had received her name also. It had been her earnest desire to accompany him there, and it was only the refusal of permission by her medical advisers that prevented her doing so. She was deeply attached to this country, and was most anxious to find that amount of interest and friendship from the people of Farney that she had experienced at Abbeyleix. He hoped she would soon be amongst them (cheers). No doubt he would then make himself really acquainted with those about him, in whom he felt so deep an interest, and with whom he was so closely connected. At all times England has been able to boast of her great men, whether as statesmen, soldiers, or men of letters, but many of those whose names are now household words owe their birth and origin to Ireland (immense cheering). At that moment he would just mention the names of one statesman and of one soldier, the greatest that have ever swayed the destinies of England. He need hardly say that in the latter, he alluded to the Duke of Wellington. Of statesmen he might name Mr. Edmund Burke, who, by birth and parentage, was clearly and entirely Irish (hear, hear, and cheers). Ireland, he thought was scarcely done justice to by Irishmen. He had heard many around him talk of improvements. Well, that day he was engaged in going through the country, and really, he never saw better cultivation or less waste land, even in England, than he had seen that day. With regard to the question of pasture *versus* arable land, some people believed that the only manner in which they could make their rent was by putting it all under grass, while others thought the cultivation of flax an essential requisite for the furtherance of the agricultural prosperity of the country. No one would deny that, great as had been the improvements

in England of late years, those in Ireland have been still greater. Allusion had been made to those times of difficulty and distress which came upon Ireland some years back. The emergency was bravely met by all classes putting their shoulders to the wheel, and extricating themselves and the country from the trials and drawbacks by which they were surrounded. These efforts had been crowned with success. Whilst going over, as he did, only a portion of the estate on that day, with Mr. Trench, certain improvements that have been made by the tenants were pointed out to him. Great praise was due to those tenants who had taken so much pains in improving the face of the country. He was glad to be able to bear testimony to all that Mr. Trench had done in carrying out his wishes, and in representing him in the manner he had to the tenantry (loud applause). It gratified him to see, both by the way in which they had received him (his lordship) the previous day, when entering the town, and incidents that afterwards occurred, and by the unmistakeable signs of respect and approval with which his (Mr. Trench's) name had been received whenever mentioned by the speakers who had preceded him, that they fully appreciated the public spirit, energy, and justice of his agent, Mr. Trench (loud cheers). He felt that it was owing to Mr. Trench's righteous and straightforward dealing between them and him that they had received him so kindly (cries of hear, hear). He assured them he (Lord Bath) had been totally guided by his advice, and in being so he rested assured that his interests were as well cared for and studied as though he had been present himself among them (loud cheers.) Before sitting down he would ask them to join him in drinking "The health of Mr. Trench," a tribute of appreciation of his many good qualities, merits, and ability. In proposing Mr. Trench's health he felt it would be un-

becoming not to propose that of Mrs. Trench also (applause), to whose taste and exertions the beautiful decorations of the room were owing.

'The toast was drunk with all the honours amidst prolonged cheering.

'Mr. Trench, in rising to respond, said—I feel deeply grateful to you, my lord, for the kind and flattering manner in which you have proposed my health, and I also feel deeply grateful to my kind friends around me, your lordship's tenants, for the generous and cordial manner in which they have responded to that toast. My lord, I will not deny that the scene which now presents itself before me has raised sensations of deep emotion in my heart. It is now some fifteen years ago since first I undertook the management of this princely and noble estate; they were troubled times then, my lord. Famine, gaunt famine, with her hideous train, had recently stalked through the land, and left the frozen imprint of her frightful foot embedded in the soil. Even rebellion had ventured to raise her head and look around her to see what sympathy she could obtain, not in Farney, thank God, but in other parts of Ireland, and wild thoughts filled the minds of Irishmen, and wild deeds were done even in the heart of Farney, so that when I look upon the scene which is now before me, when I see what Farney now is, and think of what she was then, I can scarcely recognise her identity. And yet never, my lord, never even in the worst of times, did I bate one jot of heart or hope in the noble people of Farney; never for one moment did I doubt their loyalty to their Queen, their loyalty to their country, their respect for their landlord, and above all, that they would be true and loyal to themselves. The reception which your lordship met yesterday, and the manly and independent address which was then presented to you, have justified all my anticipations, and if I wanted

further proof I have only to look upon the scene around me, and conviction is at once produced. My lord, I feel that in confiding to me the management of this great estate for so many years you confided to me a great and a deep trust. I do not now allude to the financial trust. That in itself was large, and if I had failed in that, the blot and the shame would have fallen upon my head alone. Your lordship's purse might have been the worse, but your honour would have been untouched. But, my lord, I feel that you confided to me a much higher trust than that —to a large extent you entrusted to me the honour and character of your estate (hear, hear). An estate, I conceive, has a character as well as an individual, and the owner of the estate, no matter how high a nobleman he may be, can scarcely choose but that the character of his estate must reflect more or less upon himself. Had your agent, my lord, during your absence ever broken his promise or left his promise unfulfilled, had he ever given a single pledge, and not redeemed that pledge, had he even kept his promise to the ear, but broken it to the heart and understanding, and thus deceived your tenants, the honour and character of your estate must necessarily have been tarnished and degraded —nay, I will say more, my lord, had your agent during your absence ever once received a gift, a compliment, a present, or to speak more plainly, a bribe, from a single tenant on your estate, either in goods or money to the value of a single shilling, the honour of your estate must necessarily have suffered in his hands. In Ireland, my lord, we can hardly separate the honour of the estate from the honour of the man who owns it, and my experience of the world has been that the character of an Irish estate, and the treatment of his Irish tenantry is capable of adding brilliancy to the lustre, or casting a dark shadow

over the path of the highest nobleman in England, no matter how gorgeously he may move in the brilliant circles of the sister isle, or in the highest metropolis of the world. The duties and position of an Irish agent over a large estate like this are seldom understood and appreciated by the world at large, and indeed I may also add, are rarely appreciated even by those who hold the office. He cannot choose but that his conduct must have a large influence in the district, and amongst the people over whom he is placed; he cannot help it, and be it for good or evil, his conduct must and will be felt extensively. Take for instance his position as an arbitrator between the landlord and the tenant; put it how you will he can scarcely avoid acting frequently in this capacity. Take the question of rents: there are three modes in which the rents of an estate can be settled. 1st. By the landlord himself fixing the rents he will take, and saying he will take no less, whether his tenants take or leave his land. This, I need scarcely say, is not the way in which your lordship has ever acted, nor is ever likely to act. 2nd. By receiving proposals from the tenant, leaving the tenant to fix the rent he will give. Were this plan to be adopted, which it never has been, I should almost be afraid to tell your lordship the increase which would immediately be made to your rental. The 3rd mode is to settle the rents by a public and experienced valuator. But put it how you will, shuffle it about from one to another as you will, still as a practical fact the agent over a large estate like this must necessarily, in almost all disputed cases, become the arbitrator between the interests of the landlord and the tenant, I am well aware that many will tell you that the interests of the landlord and the tenant are identical. It is a favourite aphorism this, especially at all landlord dinners, and agricultural societies; but go to a tenant-right meeting and see

if they will admit its truth. There they will tell you that their interests are directly antagonistic. The saying is true or false, according to the point from which you view it, and really I think it would be well to clear up the confusion and dispute which exists upon this subject. In one sense, my lord, it is perfectly true that the interests of the landlord and the tenant are identical. They are both partners in a great concern. The landlord supplies the main fixed capital of the partnership—the land; this is clearly proved by the fact that if your lordship chose to sell this estate to the land jobbers who are now spread over the country, the price of every acre of it would go into your lordship's pocket. I therefore say that the landlord supplies the main fixed capital in the partnership—the land. The tenant supplies the floating capital—that is, the stock, the labour, the skill, and the industry, and in some cases a portion of the fixed capital, in the buildings. If the concern thrives and succeeds, *both* parties must and ought to benefit. The tenant feels the benefit first; but in the long run, the other partner—the landlord—must and ought to come in for a share of the benefit. If the concern languishes or fails, *both* parties must necessarily suffer. The tenant feels it first, as also in the case of success, but in the end both must feel the loss. And so far those are quite right who say that the interests of the landlord and the tenant are identical. But then comes another point of view from which it must also be looked at, namely—how are the profits of the concern to be divided? Here their interests, as in the case of all other partnerships, must necessarily be antagonistic. Now, who on a large estate is to settle this dispute, to put it on a just and equitable ground? (hear, hear). On a small estate the landlord can make all these agreements himself, and the agent there becomes little more than a receiver (hear, hear). But this

could not possibly be the case on a large estate like this, and possessed by a nobleman like yourself. Your lordship has extensive estates in England, a rentroll more than double the rentroll here, the most beautiful demesne, and the noblest mansion in England, not to talk of your high duties in the counsels of the nation and the duties of your position in England. How could your lordship possibly undertake the duty of settling with each of your 1,600 tenants on 24,000 acres of land, how much of the profits of the concern each of your numerous partners should enjoy? The thing is simply impossible—this duty, therefore, must necessarily devolve upon your agent. But then his position is one of great delicacy indeed, inasmuch as he is paid for his trouble by only one of the partners in the concern, and therefore there is a tendency either to follow him who bears the purse, or, in some honourable but not well-balanced minds, to run into the opposite extreme, and do an injustice to his employer, for fear he should be accused of doing it to the other side. Such are some of the difficulties in which an Irish agent on a large estate—on which the landlord cannot possibly reside, consistently with his other duties—is placed, and really they are very serious; one false step, even though well-intentioned, is liable to set the whole side of a country in a flame; and if he happens unfortunately to be so constituted as to fail either in physical or moral courage, or to give way to passion or revenge, he will soon have the whole country in an uproar. My lord, I have felt all these matters very keenly, and have passed many an anxious day and many a sleepless night thinking over them for the last fifteen years, during which your lordship has trusted me so much; and were it not for certain indications of success, which from time to time developed themselves, I should almost have been tempted to throw up the office in despair. With your lordship's permission

I will mention a few of these indications. The first is the harmony and peace which for many years past have uniformly reigned in this barony; not only has there been great freedom from any serious crime, but sectarian animosity is almost unknown amongst us. Your lordship is at this moment surrounded by Church of England men, Church of Scotland men, and Church of Rome men, and the clergy of the several denominations are also at the table at which your lordship sits. I think I can say with truth that from the time I first came here until the present moment I have never uttered one disrespectful word against any denomination of Christians—nor would I permit it to be uttered in my presence (hear, hear, and cheers); not, my lord, that there is indifference on the subject here—far from it. I know of few places in which there are men more anxious to put forward what they believe to be the true gospel of Christ than here. Neither in public nor in private do we hesitate to raise the banner of His cross; but I also believe it to be a part of that gospel "if it be possible, as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men;" and so, my lord, we have done. And though I am well aware one angry word or injudicious act might raise passions on both sides which years could scarcely quell, yet we have all lived in harmony and peace, and respectful deference each towards the opinion of the other (cheers). Another indication which gives one good hopes of comparative success is this—that whilst in other quarters Irishmen are rushing from their native land, I can't now get a single family to leave your lordship's estate. Often and often I have proposed to some of the smallest holders to pay their full passage-money to America, to allow them to take all their stock and crop along with them, if they would only leave the poor worn-out land, that I might consolidate it with a neighbour's holding; but no, I can't get them to stir; and

though a few young men and women leave occasionally to better themselves, yet anything like emigration from the estate—to call it such—is utterly unknown here now, and has been for many years past. I confess I should like a little more elbow-room on the estate; but, as they won't go, it is at least satisfactory to see that they are not yet tired of your lordship. Another indication which gives one some hopes of success is, that for the last twelve years, during which your lordship has had possession of the estate, there have been only three appeals to your lordship against the thousands of decisions which I have thought it my duty to make. I think I am right in saying that there have been only three complaints made for the last twelve years, and, for the last five years, none at all. About one of these there still hangs a mystery. In another your lordship sanctioned my decision, and another was some trifling case, the details of which I forget. I will only mention one more indication, which cannot but be gratifying to all parties concerned, and that is the reception your lordship met with, and still more the manly address which was presented by so respectable and intelligent a deputation, as the unanimous feeling of all your tenants. In that address one expression was used to which I may be permitted to call attention: I allude to the famous aphorism of Mr. Drummond, that "property has its duties as well as its rights." I remember well when this saying was looked upon as an insult by the vast majority of the landlords of Ireland; and glad I am to see the day when it can be quoted as the highest compliment which can be paid a landlord, as it was quoted to your lordship in the address, that "though absent, you were not unmindful that property had its duties as well as its rights." I stated a little while ago that a certain mystery hung still about one of the cases of appeal against my decisions, which came before your lordship, and with

your permission I will tell the story to your tenants, as I am certain none of them here present ever heard it before. A well-to-do, comfortable-looking man of the farmer class, appeared before his lordship at Longleat, and said he came all the way from his Irish estate to complain of Mr. Trench. He was a well-shaven, corpulent-looking man, who looked as if he dined every day as well as we have done now. "What has Mr. Trench done?" said Lord Bath. "He has driven my stock, thirty head of cattle, and put them to starve in the pound," said he, "and that when my rent was as well paid up as any other tenant on the estate, and all out of spite to me." "I am sorry to hear it," said Lord Bath, "but what do you want me to do?" "I want a letter to Mr. Trench," said he, "to tell him to give me back my stock." "Well, I don't know," said Lord Bath, "there may be two sides to the story, and I should like to hear what Mr. Trench has to say." "Oh," says he, "Mr. Trench, no doubt, will give you plenty of good reasons for what he does, but I want my stock, and nothing but a letter from your lordship will make him give them up." "I really can't do that," said his lordship, "without hearing what Mr. Trench has to say, but I will write at once. What is your name?" "My name is Thomas Johnston," said he, (loud laughter, in which Mr. Johnston, who sat near Lord Bath, heartily joined); he did not say he was from "Longfield," and he mentioned a townland which I now forget. "And so you won't give me the letter?" said he. "No, I will not," said Lord Bath, "until I hear Mr. Trench's account of it." "Well, give me something to pay my expenses, at all events," said he (loud laughter). "No, really I won't do that either," said Lord Bath. Here Lord Henry Thynne came in, and seeing him a jolly, open-looking chap, took a deal of fun out of him, and I believe he told many a story about me which Lord Bath

did not repeat (hear, hear and loud cheering). Well, Lord Bath, of course, wrote to me immediately the whole story, which I now tell you. You may imagine my amazement, and you may imagine his, when I wrote back immediately to say that there was but one man named Mr. Johnston on his estate, the respected gentleman now sitting near his lordship, and I need not say he does not answer to the photograph—that there was no such townland as that named on the estate; and, above all, that never since I came to the estate had I ever driven cows in my life to pound (hear, hear). I hate the law of distress, and I never or rarely make use of it. Well, gentlemen, from that day to this, though I generally manage to know if so much as a dog barks on the estate, yet I never could make out who had originated or carried out that plan (hear, hear). I presume the object was to ascertain whether relations of mutual confidence subsisted between me and Lord Bath, but who took this curious plan to find it out, and sent this clever gentleman over, I never was able to ascertain (hear, hear). And now, my lord, let us turn to another subject. Your lordship to-day has visited only a portion of your estate. It is quite true you have as yet only seen the cream of it, but even in going over this you have been struck, as all strangers must be struck, by the extraordinary differences in the farming (hear, hear). In one place you have seen a large farm held by a first-rate farmer, farming as high, and as well, and as profitably as any in the Lothians of Scotland—(hear, hear)—and on the other side of his fence you see just as bad farming as any I know in Ireland (hear, hear). I don't mean that there is indolence or idleness, far from it—the land is cultivated up to the roots of the hedges, no waste headlands, no vacant ground (hear). I think this estate can challenge Ireland in that respect; but still bad and injudicious farming, and conse-

quent bad and light crops (cheers). I doubt if most of the farmers here present have fully considered the importance, if they farm at all, of a good crop. I am sure they think they have, but I doubt it. Have you ever considered that the seed is the same, the rent is the same, the tillage is nearly the same, the taxes are the same, the sowing is the same, the reaping is nearly the same—in fact, all the expenses are the same, or nearly so; if it be a good crop all is repaid; if it be a bad one all is lost; and yet a very little increase in the manure would have made the whole difference (hear, hear). Take a field of turnips: have you ever considered how much bigger a turnip six inches in diameter is than one three inches in diameter? Oh, twice as big, many will answer. Not at all; but eight times as big (cheers). Now, I daily see both these crops growing on land of the same quality, and side by side with each other; and yet one acre of—say Mr. Johnston's crop—which averages six inches, is worth eight acres of my friend's at the other side of the fence, who scarcely has eight acres in the world. Or take an extreme case—how much is a turnip a foot in diameter bigger than one an inch in diameter? There is no trick in it:—it is a simple fact. Some will say twelve times as large, others 144 times as large; but I never yet met a man who would at once guess it to be what it is, namely, 1728 times as large (hear, hear). And yet this is true. Suppose a loaf of bread a foot in diameter, cut it into inch-thick slices, and then cross-cut it so as to divide it into inch-cubes, and you will have 144 cubic or square inches in each inch-thick round; but there are twelve rounds, and consequently twelve times 144 is the amount that the one is bigger than the other, so that if any man had his field covered with turnips 12 inches in diameter, and his neighbours had his covered with inch-sized turnips, equi-distant both, the one acre of this field would

be worth 1728 acres of the others. This may give you some idea of the importance of a good crop, if you farm at all. Now these good crops cannot be raised without manure, and farmyard manure cannot be raised without cattle, and cattle cannot be kept without green food—and thus the importance of green food on a farm. His lordship has now engaged an agriculturist who will explain all this to any farmer who desires it, and who will show him how to raise green crops in abundance if he will only follow his advice. But, my lord, I do not rise here to find fault with your tenantry—far from it. I have found them as industrious, as reasonable, and as intelligent a tenantry as in any part of Ireland. I have had much experience in many parts of Ireland, south, midland, and north, and never have I found any tenantry to surpass your lordship's in these qualifications, and very few to come up to them. There are two main points, my lord, which have rendered my position here less difficult than it would otherwise have been; one is a liberal and generous landlord, who never once refused any claim I have made upon him, either for charity, liberality, or reasonable expenditure on his estate. I think it right, my lord, that your tenants should know this fact, that *never once, during the whole time I have been your agent, have you ever checked or discountenanced me in any act of liberality or expenditure which I recommended as desirable on your estate,* and this, though you were fully acquainted every year both by my accounts, and annual report, of every item which was going forward. I believe there are few agents who could say this of an absent landlord; and that large sums have been expended everyone who knows this estate must be very well aware. But there is another fact also, without which my duties would almost have become intolerable, and that is, that I have found your tenantry, as a general rule, truthful, honest, upright,

and industrious. I never met a tenantry I would sooner deal with, or one more generally guided by fair justice and reasonable conduct. My lord, it is a deep gratification to me this day to have the happiness of being the medium of introduction between such a generous landlord and such an upright and honest tenantry (loud cheers). Mr. Trench then resumed his seat amidst prolonged applause.

'The Chairman then proposed, in eloquent terms, the health of the Members for the County.

'The toast was drunk with all the honours.

'Captain Foster, on the part of his father, Sir George Foster, returned thanks. He regretted the absence of the gentlemen whose health had been so warmly responded to, but he was sure did not important business prevent the attendance of his father, nothing could give him greater satisfaction than to participate in the pleasure which everyone present appeared to evince consequent on his lordship's visit to Ireland (hear, hear). After some further remarks, Captain Foster resumed his seat amid loud applause.

'The Chairman again rose and proposed "The Army and Navy." Air—"The Red, White, and Blue."

'Mr. Morant responded. He thanked them sincerely for the kind and cordial manner in which they had received the toast proposed. The speaker in glowing terms referred to the glorious services rendered by Irishmen, both in the army and navy, and eloquently adverted to several facts in connection with the high position which at different times Irishmen had attained in the two great institutions.

'"The Press" was next given and responded to, and after a most agreeable evening the company separated.

'His lordship then entered into the carriage, which was in waiting, and as it rolled through the gates of the Market-house the noble occupant was hailed with loud cheers

from the vast assemblage which had congregated outside. Brilliant illuminations were seen on all sides, and amongst the rest was a magnificent transparency, outside the residence of Mr. Lang, under-agent, displaying, to the admiration of every one who perceived it, the coat of arms of the Marquis. The National Bank, too, was very beautifully lit up, throwing, as it did, a glare of light for a considerable distance round it. It is most creditable to observe that notwithstanding the great enthusiasm which universally prevailed in Carrickmacross, the decorum of the inhabitants was characterised by that order which elicited from the many strangers that thronged the town expressions of the greatest admiration. His lordship's stay, we understand, will not be long, but when he takes his departure he will leave behind him recollections of a pleasing nature. The favourable impression he has already created cannot be easily effaced, and if we are not greatly mistaken the Marquis of Bath, under the direction of his worthy agent, will realise the fullest expectations of the tenantry on this great estate. Mr. Trench in an able and masterly speech has described the Bath tenantry as industrious and trustworthy, which with a good and benevolent landlord, a conscientious, painstaking, and considerate agent, nothing surely can be wanting in Farney to spread peace, happiness, and content.'

To the Editor of the 'Examiner.'

CARRICKMACROSS, May 20, 1865.

'SIR—I perceive that in any of your notices of the visit of the Marquis of Bath to his Irish estate, you make no mention of his lordship's thoughtful kindness to THE POOR of his estate, whereas it should not be forgotten that his lordship visited the Union Poorhouse during his stay, and

went round all the wards in person, and on leaving ordered that a meat dinner should be given to every pauper in the workhouse, to whom the medical attendant would allow the same, the whole to be paid for out of his lordship's private funds; also, on Thursday, the day after the splendid banquet given to his tenantry, he directed that a dinner equally good with that of the preceding day should be provided for every one of the workmen and artisans usually employed on the estate; and these all sat down to the number of seventy-one to a splendid repast, of the same quality, both as to wine and viands, as had been furnished to his tenantry.

'These acts of kindness and liberality should not be forgotten in the midst of the more splendid arrangements of another kind.

'A CORRESPONDENT.'

The following letters, written in March, 1847, will afford some idea of the scenes which must have occurred along the south-western coast of Ireland, where no attempts were made, similar to those made by the Rev. F. F. Trench, to save the lives of the people.

FAMINE IN SCHULL.

'CLOGHJORDAN, March 22, 1847.

'SIR—My attention was first directed to the famine in Schull by Captain Caffin's letter. It was painful to myself and others to think that within two or three days' journey from our homes thousands of our fellow-creatures should be dying of absolute starvation.

'We felt that though there were multitudes around us suffering most severely from insufficiency of food, yet that

there was an immeasurable distance between their state and that of persons dying from extreme hunger. It was therefore proposed that I should visit those localities with a view to administering such relief as appeared most judicious and practicable. I accordingly did so, and have just returned.

'And as the testimony of an eyewitness totally unconnected with the county of Cork by property or family relations, may possibly gain the attention of some who may disregard the representations of those whose interests and feelings are more closely bound up with those places, I think it my duty to make the public still better acquainted with the present condition of the poor in those parts; and I do so the more readily, because I do not accede to the often repeated statement that the evil is irremediable and beyond the reach of human aid. When I have described the existing state of things I shall venture to propose the adoption of a measure which has not as yet been tried in those districts, but which has been successfully tried elsewhere (and which has preserved life and health to a great degree) at the cost of three halfpence per day for each person.

'The account which Captain Caffin gave of what he saw at Schull seemed too dreadful to be true, but there is one broad and astounding fact which indisputably proves that it was far, very far, below the truth, and that is that every family which Captain Caffin visited, and of which he writes, was a Protestant family. Dr. Traill, the rector of the parish, and Rev. Mr. M'Cabe, the curate, stated this to me. Now, it is well known, that in every part of Ireland the Protestants are a wealthier class than the Roman Catholics. If here, then, the Protestants are in the state which Captain Caffin describes, what must be the condition of the Roman Catholics? Dr. Traill himself said to me,

after returning to the hovels to which he accompanied me —"until to-day I did not know the real state of the people."

'In travelling through the parishes of East and West Schull, containing the villages of Ballydehob and Schull, and a population of about 16,000 still living, I did not see a child playing in the streets or on the roads; no children are to be seen outside the doors but a few sick and dying children. I made this same remark in Bantry, and along the road for twenty miles leading to it. I did not see a child in the streets, and this I remarked to several persons, clergy and magistrates, whose experience was the same as my own.

'In the districts which are now being depopulated by starvation, coffins are only used for the more wealthy. In every village the manufacture was remarkable at the doors of the carpenters' houses, and in the country parts I often met coffins carried on the backs of women, and boards for making coffins. At Glengariff, strange to say, the Roman Catholic Chapel is turned into a place for making coffins. Seeing two men at work there, I went in, in company with Rev. Mr. Morgan, the curate of the parish. I said to one of the carpenters, "What are you making, boys?" "Coffins and wheelbarrows, Sir;" and I saw the planks marked out for the sawyer to the length of coffins. At Bantry, I saw lying at the corner of one of the streets, two coffins for the use of the poor; they call them "trap coffins;" the bottom is supported by hinges at one side, and a hook and eye at the other. In these coffins the poor are carried to the grave, or rather to a large pit, which I saw at a little distance from the road, and the bodies are dropped into it. On my return to the spot where I first saw these two coffins, I found them occupied with corpses, and placed on a car about to be drawn by a horse to the grave. Another coffin of the same kind had been sent in another direction for another body; but I was told in this district the majority were

taken to the grave without any coffin, and buried in their rags: in some instances even the rags are taken from the corpse to cover some still living body; but in the neighbourhood and parish of Schull, coffins are not thought of by the very poor, and funerals are unknown amongst them. At Ballydehob, Mr. and Miss Noble both informed me that on the morning of the day I arrived, they had seen five dead bodies carried through the village in a cart with a little straw under and over them.

'That bodies are left in the fields for weeks unburied is a matter perfectly certain, and also that they have been left unburied in houses so long that they have been eaten by rats, and indeed so long that they could not be buried, and it became necessary to burn the houses over the bodies.

'Captain Harston (the commander who brought the "Eclaire" from Africa), the agent of the British Relief Association, informed me that on Sunday, March 7, he had seen a woman with a basket on her back, and the crooked corpse of a child fastened outside it. In company with Dr. Traill, the Rector of Schull, I met Dr. M'Cormick, the dispensary physician of the parish of Kilmoe; he stated that on Tuesday, March 9, he had met a man, a father, tottering along the road—a rope was over his shoulder, and at the other end of the rope, streeling along the ground, were two dead children, whom he was with difficulty dragging to the grave!!

'Mr. O'Callaghan, of Kilmanus, informed me that he used the meal bags for burying the people; graves are frequently made in ditches, and corners of the fields, and in the gardens behind the cabins. I saw in one garden, not far from Ballydehob, close to the mail-coach road, two graves in a garden—one large, in which I was told were three bodies, the smaller one in which there were two bodies; and the house had been burned, in consequence of

the whole family, nine in number, having died in it of fever.

'After public worship on Sunday, March 14, I met the Ballydehob Relief Committee. As I had so little time at my command, and remembering our Lord's instruction—that it is lawful to save life on the Sabbath day—I asked the committee to meet me, and received their fullest and most cordial approval of my plan of establishing eating-houses in the more remote districts of the parish. We made arrangements whereby the duplicate of funds given for this purpose would be secured from Government. The rules for the conduct of the eating-houses were stated by me; and the Protestant minister and the Roman Catholic priest were constituted a sub-committee to carry them into execution, pledging themselves to the observance of the rules in the strictest manner. I then proceeded to Cappagh, which is a coast-guard station, in the midst of a starving population, which had been collected round mines which are not now worked. It was proposed to establish the first eating-house in this place. On the evening before, I had heard of a boy living on the road to Cappagh, who had seen a dog tearing the head, and neck, and ribs of a man. I wished to learn the truth of this from the boy himself. He told me that the fact was so, and that his little brother had on another occasion seen another dog tearing the head of a man. The younger boy remarked that he had seen the remains of the head the day before in an adjoining field. I asked him to lead me to the spot, which he did, and I there found a part of the human head and under-jaw, gnawed, but marked with blood. I placed it under ground.

'On arriving at Cappagh I found the coast-guard and his wife (a tidy little Englishwoman) placed under circumstances almost as pitiable as the poorest of those who sur-

rounded her, inasmuch as she was daily witnessing absolute starvation without the means of relieving it. Within a few yards of the coast-guard house were three families which I saw starving to death. Moore, the coast-guard, told me that he had buried numbers of bodies himself—that he was obliged to do so in self-defence, for fear that they should breed a pestilence. In the first house I entered I saw a dead child lying in a corner of the house, and two children pale as death, with their heads hanging down upon their breasts sitting by a small fire. Mrs. Moore, who accompanied me into the house, told me the sad history of the family. The father had died on the road coming home from work. One of the children, a lad seventeen years of age, had been found in the absence of his mother who was looking for food, lying dead, with his head leaning on the hob close to the fire, and with his legs held out of the fire by the little child which I then saw lying dead. Two other children had also died. The mother and the two children still alive had lived on one dish of barley for the last four days. For these famished children I obtained from Mrs. Moore a cake of brown bread, and sent it to them by the mother. In about a minute after I entered the house again, to see whether they were eating this cake voraciously, and found the children sitting in the same posture. I feared they had not got the bread, but they had devoured it. I questioned them closely—asked them what colour it was. The child who replied said it was black; it was coarse brown bread.

'In the next house which I entered I learned that the father a few days before had been found dead at a turf clamp, where he had gone for turf; the mother had buried one child (as they said) off her back, meaning that she carried the child on her back to the grave; and I saw three others apparently dying. In the third house I entered

there was a family—a father, mother, and five children—all of whom were dying slowly of simple weakness, the consequence of hunger: half a stone of meal a week was their sole support. The man said he knew they were all dying; he said their appetites were all good, and they had no sickness. After administering some little present relief, and having had in some degree cheered these families by the hope that food would be brought within their reach, I proceeded about four miles to Schull. I shall now state what I saw immediately in and around the village of Schull, together with cursory observations made by Dr. Sweetman.

'In order to understand aright the position in which I was placed during the time when the remarks which I am about to relate were made, I should mention that Rev. Dr. Traill (the rector of the parish), Rev. Mr. M'Cabe (the curate), Dr. Sweetman, and myself, were going from house to house, and occasionally standing in the street or road, surrounded by hundreds of clamorous beggars and wretched objects, many of them with evidently dying children in their arms. We went into three houses close to each other, and more dreadful objects I never saw. Dr. Sweetman said, "Now, nothing can recover those you saw; they must all die. Sir, the people die unconsciously to themselves; they are foolishly delirious; they die before your eyes. The pulse does not average fifty; there is water between it and your hand. Look down the street—you need not select any house—and it's worse in the country." This I afterwards found to be the case.

'On entering another house the doctor said, "Look there, Sir, you can't tell whether they are boys or girls." Taking up a skeleton child, he said, "Here is the way it is with them all; their legs swing and rock like the legs of a doll," and I saw that it was so in this instance. "Sir, they have the smell of mice." After I had seen a great number of

these miserable objects, the doctor said, "Now, Sir, there is not a child you saw can live for a month; every one of them are in famine fever, a fever so sticky that it never leaves them."

'Rev. Dr. Traill and Dr. Sweetman both told me that there were not one hundred out of the three thousand families in Schull parish which could command their breakfast the next morning. I said to Dr. Sweetman, "If you were on your oath in a court of justice would you say so?" "I would say so if I was before the judgment-seat of Christ: there are no exceptions; east, west, north or south, it is all the same. The police officer, Mr. Garney, was present. I said to him, "Do you, Sir, believe that statement, that there are not a hundred families in the parish of Schull who can command a breakfast of their own independently of charity to-morrow?" He replied, "There are not fifty." Pointing to what might be called the outline of a fine young man in the crowd, Dr. Sweetman said, "There, Sir, is the remains of fever and dysentery"—this was a very affecting case, the young man was foolish. Again—"There is a woman, and finer curly-haired children than hers were not in the Queen's dominions; now they are all gone, husband and children, and see what she is." "Here is a man, and there is no perceptible motion at all in his pulse." Soon after the Doctor said, "There is a man, his child died last night—he is unable to dig his grave; I sent my man to dig it." I asked had he any coffin, and was answered, "Oh no;" and then turning to the man himself he said, "And you will die surely, my poor man," meaning that he could not live many days.

'The above details, though neither the worst, nor one-fifth part of those which I have to give, are sufficient, perhaps too much, for the present. I hasten to state the remedy which I propose, and what I have done towards it.

The new poor law * is designed to be as complete a remedy as possible; but until it is in full operation, which may not be for a considerable time, the people must die by thousands.

'The remedy which I propose is the establishment of eating-houses within reach of those upon whom disease has not as yet made mortal inroads.

'The sending of a sufficient number of suitable agents to arrange for, or if necessary manage, those eating-houses; and physicians should be sent to prescribe the food and medicine which is necessary for them. This would cost large sums of money; but if the rich could be assured it would save life, the required sums would be given.

'It appears to me that eating-houses, where a meal of wholesome substantial food might be given daily to all who were certified in danger of perishing from hunger, would be the cheapest and surest plan of preventing starvation. Soup may be anything, everything, or nothing; it may be thin gruel or greasy water, and I have tasted it of both descriptions; or it may be the essence of meat, and very wholesome where there is some substantial food taken with it; but when given to those who have nothing else to use with it, and who often expend, by coming miles for it, more strength than the soup restores, it is very inefficient for sustaining life. But there can be no mistake about a meal of substantial Indian meal stirabout or porridge; and I know that one meal daily of this food so given to the poor, who have been obliged to come clean and partake of it, has preserved life and health to a great degree, and does not cost more than 1½*d.* per day.

'In none of the districts where I was did the case appear to me to be desperate; there was no want of food in any place (delightful consideration!) nor want of medicine, but

* The Irish Poor Relief Act was then in its infancy. W. S. T.

there was the most deplorable want of available agency, *and a consequent want of suitable measures to bring the food and the medicine within the reach of the people.*

'Take for example the one parish of Schull (and there are many like it). Here there are scarcely any gentry and none rich. What can one physician do amongst 18,000 people in such a state (and oats for his horse so dear)? What can the ordinary number of local clergy do in such an extensive district? They cannot visit one-tenth part of the sick, even if they had horses, and oats to feed them, which some of them have not. Can Dr. Traill be expected to carry meal to the people in the mountains across the pummel of his saddle, as he has done? Can Mr. M'Cabe, the curate, be expected to push in the door and look for a vessel, and wash the vessel previous to putting a drink into it for the sick, who were unable to rise, as he has done? But let there be provided a sufficient staff of fit men to prescribe for the sick, and to place cooked food within the reach of the poor, and I feel confident that the supply of money that the public have proved themselves ready to give would pay for all, and so prevent absolute starvation, and restore health in many instances.

'It does appear to me that without any special interposition of divine power the plague might be stayed, and "the dearth and scarcity" easily turned, not, indeed into "cheapness" (for man cannot create food), but "into plenty," for the preservation of human life.

'I shall add, that I made arrangements with the local clergy and the relief committees for the opening of four or five such eating-houses.

'By cooperation with the clergy and the relief committees I have the prospect of a duplicate from Government of every sum which my friends have entrusted to my care. I have sent my lay assistant from my own parish, who has

been conversant with the details of the management of such eating-houses, to assist in immediately carrying out the arrangements made; and I have requested Evory Kennedy, Esq., M.D., to select a physician, who shall immediately go to Schull, and act under the directions of the local clergy.

'I only add, that the case is literally, and to the eye of sense as well as of faith, a case of life and death; and I feel that relief should be sent with the speed with which a reprieve is conveyed to the malefactor about to be executed.

'We may indulge a hope that the new poor law will ere very long be in full operation. I am sure the Government is doing all it can to expedite matters, but in the meantime it is to be feared that the loss of life will be dreadful. Here is a case indeed where it may be said—

Bis dat qui cito dat.

'F. F. TRENCH,
'Perpetual Curate of Cloghjordan.

'P.S.—Since writing the above I have waited on Mr. Redington and Sir J. Burgoyne, and feel assured that no time will be lost in bringing the new law into operation. But the arrangements are complicated, and the lives of thousands depend on what is done *now*.'

'CLOGHJORDAN, April 2, 1847.

'SIR—You occupied a large portion of your paper on a former occasion with my statement relative to the south-west of the county of Cork. I ask permission to make a further statement concerning what I witnessed pursuing my course through the village of Schull, and the straggling houses surrounding it, accompanied by Dr. Traill and the Rev. Mr. M'Cabe, the curate, and Dr. Sweetman, physican. In one house which I entered Dr. Sweetman proceeded into a dark corner, and feeling with his hand, told me

there were six in the bed—father, mother, and four children, all unable to rise—but I was particularly struck with the question which the doctor put to the poor people, when he was feeling for them in the bed, "Are there any dead here?" None were actually dead at that time, but one had died.

'In another house we entered there were four in fever, two having died, and the doctor said to me, "The father, he will be down in fever before Thursday, though gone to make his appearance on the road." *

'In another house (Minahan's), I saw the father lying dead, his wife and sick daughter only remained.

'In another house, without a door, I saw a dying man, who had been taken off the roads, a dying woman, and a boy sitting with his legs burst with dropsy.

'In another house I saw a sick man who had a peculiarly fœtid smell, which Dr. Sweetman remarked to me. Mr. Limerick, J.P., told me afterwards that the doctor had given directions that the man should be buried instantly upon his death, as otherwise it would be impossible to bury him. In the same conversation, at Dr. Traill's house, Mr. Limerick told me that one day he had employed thirty-five men (who were on the roads)* in gangs of four or five to bury the dead.

'Going to the next cabin, pointing to a woman who met us, the doctor said, "Now, there's a woman actually in fever, the other members of the family are all worse than her; she had no messenger to send for anything." While I was in company with Mr. M°Cabe on this occasion, he gave two tickets to women to get work on the roads in place of their husbands who had died; telling me at the same time, that as Secretary to the Relief Committee, he had altered in the course of the last eight days in a

* Relief works.

hundred instances the names of the men who had died to the names of their wives, and that in that space of time there had been six cases in which he had altered the name from the father to the son, and from the son to the widow, and from the widow to the daughter, all having died.

'In this morning's walk, which occupied between two and three hours, Dr. Traill and I calculated that I had entered between thirty and forty houses, and that I had seen about 120 sick persons.

'Several dreadful and affecting anecdotes were related to me, the repetition of which would serve no good purpose. One I may relate, descriptive merely of the character of the things to which I allude. Mr. M'Cabe mentioned that he had seen a child lying upon the bosom of the dead father, and in that position the child died twelve hours after; and that the remnant of that family, six in number, were now dying.

'There is a degree of filth amongst the people here which I had never seen elsewhere—not only dunghills before the door, but dunghills close to the door, and several feet higher than the level of the threshold of the door. In many of the houses straw was scattered over the whole of the floor, and the people lived, I may say, exactly like pigs in a stye, with the worst possible filth in the houses. And one house (the abominable filth of whieh was particularly observable) was one of those which had been previously visited and mentioned by name in Captain Caffin's letter.

'Feeling that there was no use in witnessing more of this misery, I turned back. In doing so a house at a little distance was pointed out to me as having eight persons lying sick in it. I went to it, and on entering, found six lying sick on straw, or rather dung, and one man walking about the picture of death, and, I was told, dying.

'But before I leave off my record of misery in this one

spot I again say that all this evil *is not irremediable.* I remarked to Mr. M'Cabe, "This ought to be a healthy place" (it is situated at the end of a pretty little bay surrounded by rocks). "Yes, Sir," Mr. M'Cabe replied, "and there is *a great rally for life here*; a drink of rice milk gives great strength. A poor woman to whom I gave some rice said, 'I was weak yesterday; I feel strong to-day.'" Mr. M'Cabe has had the pleasure of seeing convalescent families, and had seen that day one poor woman combing her hair, and in her right mind, who had been delirious in fever a few days before.

'In the afternoon of the same day I proceeded, in company with the Rev. Mr. M'Cabe, to Keelbronogue, a district which was stated to be famishing and requiring an eating-house. On my way thither I met Captain Harston, the agent of the British Association, and he kindly turned about and accompanied me. When we arrived at Keelbronogue we met the Roman Catholic priest of the parish, Mr. Barry; and he also kindly proposed to go with me and give me any information in his power. I asked Mr. Barry to point out to me the most distressed houses. He said, "In every direction it is all the same."

'In the first house I entered there was a man lying in fever, and wife and child sitting up. I found the door shut. A young man who lived near told me that he had not seen the door open except once or twice in the last fortnight. There was a can of water near the bed: four of the family had died. The sick people said they had eaten nothing and expected nothing that day. I immediately sent to a farmer's house, at a little distance, for some oatenmeal, and gave some to them and took the remainder with me.

'In the second house I entered (Patrick Driscoll's) there were eight in family; three sick; one man lay dead beside

the fire. I asked did he die of fever? "No, Sir, of starvation," was the reply.

'Third house (Regan). Here I heard the groaning of a sick and (I was told) a dying man. The place was so dark I did not go in far. Eight in family; pictures of death. Two girls and a young child said they had eaten nothing all day. Mr. Barry said he had been a decent farmer.

'Fourth house (Widow Driscoll). Here I saw a young man. He was groaning, and as it appeared to me in the agony of death. There were five in family. They said they had eaten nothing since Saturday, *i.e.* for two days and a half. They were all sick; all were swelled; and the gentlemen with me said, "*None of them can live.*"

'Fifth house (Mat Sullivan). We knocked here. None were able to open the door. Two very young children sitting by the fire, and two lying pale as death.

'Sixth house (Widow Cunningham). She had buried her husband and three of her children. She had been ill for eight weeks. Her last boy had taken fever the day before. She had no one to go for anything now. The last drink she got was a jug of water from a woman going along the road, and knew not where the next was to come from.

'Seventh house (Phil. Regan). He had died, and the widow was dying. Three children had died. She was awfully swelled.

'Eighth house (Paddy Ryan). Eight, all sick. One had died. Child scarcely able to open the door.

'Ninth house (Charles Regan). Of eleven only three remaining. We had met the woman of this house on the road and she accompanied us to most of the houses. When we arrived at her cabin she said, "I have within a fine young man, of nineteen years of age, and *you could carry him in the palm of your hand.*" I entered, and saw

a bundle of skin and bone naked, and partly wrapped up in a blanket, sitting by the fire. The mother said, "Sir, we have no sickness, but hunger."

'I had seen enough. These houses were not all in a row, but scattered in the fields and along the roadside. I did not pass by a single house. Turning round, I said to Mr. Barry, the Roman Catholic curate, "Are the houses I see lower down as bad?" He said, "They are, Sir; and all along the place; they are in fact worse below; it is more populous; I have come from a house there, in which I saw two stretched." But being quite as tired in mind and body as I ought to be, I did not proceed farther, and returned to the hospitable dwelling of Doctor Traill. I need say no more respecting the extent of the evil at present; I come to the remedy.

'I solicit free contributions of personal service from intelligent and devoted men. Money I know will be required to keep such men at work, but we want MEN now to make the money which we have work in the most effective manner for the preservation of the lives of the people.

'The confidence which I expressed in my last communication that the rich were willing to contribute whatever funds were necessary has been more than realised. One subscriber sends 100*l.*; another has allowed me to draw upon his purse to an unlimited extent; another subscriber sent me so much that I thought it right to decline receiving more than half the subscription. Another subscriber of 10*l.* says, "The slightest intimation will bring a similar sum." Under these circumstances, I ask for the free contribution of *the personal services of a few intelligent men*, who heartily recognise and sincerely endeavour to love God supremely, and their neighbour as themselves. Those who have money at their disposal have contributed most liberally. Let those who have time at their disposal

do likewise; their business should be to assist the committee and clergy in superintending the management of the eating-houses, to see that the food was properly cooked and properly distributed, that none but proper objects received it, and to see that the regulations were observed, that the accounts of the expenditure were daily kept, and that there was no waste incurred in any department. We would gladly pay the travelling and all other expenses of any gentleman fit for this work, and willing to engage in it; and in order to avoid all unnecessary delay, Evory Kennedy, Esq. M.D., 27 Merrion Square, and Sir E. Waller, Bart., 13 Waterloo Road, are authorised at once to accept the proffered service of any gentleman whom they may consider qualified for the task.—I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully and obliged,

'F. F. TRENCH.'

Extract of a letter from the Rev. Richard Chenevix Trench, Professor of Divinity in King's College, London, and now Archbishop of Dublin, to the Rev. F. F. Trench:—

'I have just returned from Killbronogue. All is progressing there most satisfactorily. Excellent order kept, all your rules observed, and had not this day been rainy, nothing could have been pleasanter than the sight of the 200 or more eating their food, certainly with thankfulness to men, I trust also with thankfulness to God. But they did not seem to mind the rain, and we got the children under cover.

'To-morrow a neighbouring townland, Rossbrin, is to be taken into the system: about a hundred Rossbrinites will be fed by an earlier distribution from the Kilbronogus boiler. They are now dying there, as they did at Killbronogue before the eating-house was established. I know not what is to be done with Ballydehob; the mass of wild

fierce hunger there is almost unmanageable. We shall be spending (and economically and honestly spending) I cannot think much less than 100*l.* weekly. Some imposture must and will creep in, for everything is obliged to be done in somewhat of a rough manner, but many lives will be saved; and what Dr. Sweetman said to-night—"This is the first efficient plan for feeding the people which has been in the parish"—will, with all drawbacks, remain true. This is a matter to thank God for.

'I found the distress not deeper (for that had been impossible) but quite as deep and far wider, covering a vaster extent of territory than from your letter I had gathered. When, however, I left, in the middle of last week, there were already eight or nine eating-houses in active operation, and new ones opening every day. These, at which severally from 300 to 500 or 600 were being fed, relieved an immense amount of misery, and yet left vast regions, even in these two parishes alone, which were as yet untouched.

'I visited several of the stations and witnessed the distribution of the food, which in every case was either nutritious stirabout, or excellent biscuit. "There would not be twenty of us alive here but for this," said a woman to me in one place; and Mr. Kennedy observed to me how wonderful was the alteration already visible in the looks of those who partook of the food. The mortality, too, though it had not ceased (for many who were death-stricken before the eating-houses were opened, could not be saved by them), yet had been arrested, and we might humbly hope the famine would have in those districts at least no new victims. Altogether, I saw enough to show me that very much is being done, and being effectually done; but that as yet things are very, very far from the point we aim at—namely, that "every destitute person in these parishes shall have a meal of wholesome food within their reach daily." There

is all zeal on the part of those engaged with you in this work on the spot to hasten such a consummation; and I see no reason why, through God's blessing, and through many and large efforts, it may not be attained.'

'Before I conclude I wish to mention the very small cost of these eating-houses. I have before me the returns of five of the eating-houses, and I find that 9,409 substantial meals have been given at an average cost of less than 1¼*d.* each! and at that trifling daily cost for food, I believe that the Lord will enable us to save life to whatever extent funds may be entrusted to our care. The agency which is essentially necessary, and for want of which, more than for want of food, life was lost, will necessarily cost much. But supposing the agency to be fully provided, the food where-with we can save the lives of our "neighbours," and preserve them also in tolerable health, does not cost more than 1¼*d.* daily. The lives of the people in that district seem to be marvellously given into our hands, and who can tell what a blessed influence our charity may have upon their spiritual welfare! Yes, while deprecating in the strongest possible manner the holding out of any carnal inducements to the reception of spiritual good, and while loathing from my innermost soul the iniquity of holding out an inducement to the miserable to do that to which their poverty and not their will might consent—still I say, who can tell the extent to which in this very district the Saviour's word may be ultimately fulfilled—"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven!"

'I have this morning received copies of letters from Schull addressed by Doctors Lamprey and Sweetman to the Board of Health, asking for more food and medicine. This I have pledged myself to supply.

'I intend, if the Lord will, to go to Schull on Monday

next, and the extent to which new arrangements may be made for saving life must depend upon the amount of funds which are placed at my disposal.

'In my last letter I intimated that *I wanted men more than money.* The men have been provided (and I have more men ready to engage in the work)—I now want more money; for, as my valued brother, the Rev. Richard Trench, has intimated, I did not know the vast extent of the misery when I wrote my last letter—to use his own expression, "Wherever he tapped it he found it all the same."

'For the information of my English friends I mention that Cloghjordan is a post town, to which place all communications made to me should be addressed.

'I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully and obliged,

'F. F. TRENCH,

'Perpetual Curate of Cloghjordan.

'P.S.—*April* 23.—I deeply regret to say that I have just heard of the death of Dr. Traill, Rector of Schull. He was "pressed above measure," and "beyond strength," and doubtless "his reward was on high."'

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